

THE JEWS, THE GENTILES,

AND THE

CHURCH OF GOD,

IN THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

BY

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SCHOETTLE PUBLISHING CO., INC.

P.O. Box 594

Miami Springs, Florida 33166

U.S.A.

1989

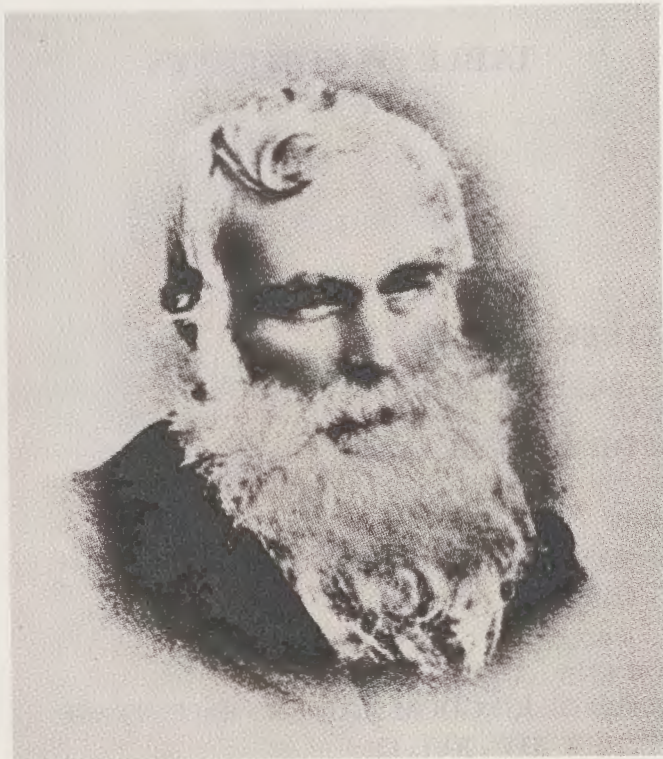
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First Printing — James Nisbet & Co. 1869  
Second Printing — Schoettle Publishing Co. 1989





ROBERT GOVETT, TOWARDS THE END OF HIS MINISTRY

## The Jews, the Gentiles, AND THE Church of God, in the Gospel of Matthew.

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OUR times are those of crisis, and of peril in doctrine, as well as in practice. There are many who are systematically setting aside the teaching of the Gospels, with the all-sufficient cry—‘That’s *Jewish!*’ In so doing they are ceasing to be disciples of *Christ*, for the teaching of the Lord Jesus as a whole is only to be found in the Gospels. In regard to the New Testament, they are falling into the very error of interpretation which was so justly rebuked, when applied to the prophets. ‘All the *promises* are for the *Church*: all the *threats* for the *Jews.*’ Nay, some are throwing overboard all *commands* too! ‘To the church belongs privilege only: no precepts, no responsibility!’

It is time then to show that—‘What the Gospel saith, it saith to them that are under the Gospel.’ I would exemplify this in the Gospel of Matthew, because against *that* the chief onset is made.

There is no need to define what is meant by ‘Israel.’ I may sometimes use the words ‘Jews’ and ‘Jewish’ as equivalent, though well aware of the difference



between the two terms. But in this inexact sense our opponents use the word, when they say—'That's Jewish.'

By 'the Church' I mean the spiritual body of Christ, which began to be formed when the Holy Ghost descended at Pentecost, to testify of the risen and ascended Son of God. The Church is neither Jewish nor Gentile, but one body gathered out of both. It is true that this body is not shown in the Gospels in its fulness. But it is recognized in the "disciples" who listened to Jesus; and stands opposed to "the evil generation," which consists of unbelieving Israelites and Gentiles. The term "disciples," which begins in the Gospels, is continued throughout the Acts, after the Church is formed; and applies equally to the converts made by Paul and by Peter.

Moreover the term "the Church" is found thrice in Matthew—and in that Gospel only:—the first time announcing its construction as near; the second and third time recognizing its existence and its authority: xvi, 18; xviii, 17.

But there are beside 'the Church,' two other bodies recognized of God, 'the Jews' and 'the Gentiles:': 1 Cor. x, 32. These three bodies are all to be found at last in the millennium, or "the kingdom of heaven."

The great subject of our Lord's teaching, alike to Israel and the Church, is "*the kingdom of God*," or "the kingdom of heaven." \* On this point also error has come in, and many are setting aside 'the kingdom of God' as 'Jewish,' or 'earthly' only.

But the kingdom of God has *two* compartments; 'the earthly,' and 'the heavenly.' The Son of Man as the ladder of Jacob, is to unite the earth and the heaven. "Rabbi, thou art the Son of *God*: [here is the point of the ladder which touches *heaven*] thou art the king of *Israel*:" [here is the foot of the ladder which touches *earth*]: John i, 49—51.

\* I admit that there is a difference between these two terms, but it does not affect the argument generally.

Moreover the Gospel of Matthew presents Jesus as "Son of Abraham." Now Abraham had two wives, and two sons; and these typified two seeds. For to Abraham God promised two seeds; one of his flesh, and one of his faith. He would give him a seed "like the sand of the sea-shore;" (the *earthly*.) And a seed "as the stars of the heaven;" (the *heavenly*;) Matt. iii, 9; Heb. xi, 12; Rev. vii; Gen. xxii, 17. The earthly glory of the millennial kingdom was promised to Israel in the Old Testament prophets: Jer. xxxi. The heavenly glory of the same kingdom was offered to Israel by Jesus; and was by the nation refused, as we shall see. Thenceforward the heavenly glory is offered to believers of the Church; and they are urged to seek it: Phil. iii, 10—15; 2 Tim. iv, 18; Heb. iv, 11.

Hints of this two-foldness were given even to Moses. He was called up to tarry awhile in the heavenly temple, and was to make copies of what he saw for the earthly temple: Heb. viii, 4, 5; ix, 23, 24. Paul, describing the kingdom of God and the bodies of the resurrection, tells us, that there are bodies of earth and bodies of heaven, each having a glory differing from the other: 1 Cor. xv, 40, 47—50. But both will be found at last in their several departments in the kingdom. For to Abraham belong two countries; one of earth, and one of heaven. The land on which he lay was made his by God's covenant: Gen. xv. But he looked for "a better country, that is an heavenly." And each of these countries has a Jerusalem for its city; the one, Jerusalem below; the other, Jerusalem the heavenly: Gal. iv, 21—27; Heb. xii, 22. Of course the Gentiles who are spared belong to the earthly department of the kingdom, and go up at set times to worship at the Jerusalem of earth.

In order to present my subject with the greater clearness, it is necessary to divide the Gospel of Matthew into its proper parts. They are, I suppose, seven in number, arranged as follows:—



I.	{	Chap. i, ii.	JESUS BY BIRTH KING OF THE JEWS.
		iii—xii, 45.	KINGDOM OF GOD PROCLAIMED: SPIRIT BLASPHEMED.
III.	{	xii, 46—xiii.	KINGDOM IN MYSTERY. <i>Prophetic.</i> TIME OF THE CHURCH.
IV.	{	xiv—xvi, 12.	HERALD OF KINGDOM SLAIN. NO REPENTANCE.
V.	{	xvi, 13—xx, 28	KINGDOM IN MYSTERY. <i>Practical</i> CHURCH'S RULES.
VI.	{	xx, 29—xxv.	KING PRESENTED TO JERUSALEM. SECOND ADVENT.
VII.	{	xxvi—xxviii.	KING REFUSED. SLAIN. RISES.

In this table, No. 1 gives us Israel, and a select few of the Gentiles. No. 2 presents Israel tested, and found wanting. No. 3 gives the prediction of the time of *the Mystery*, while Israel is blinded, and an election from the Gentiles is being brought in. No. 4 offers to us Israel borne with in patience, but no repentance. No. 5 shows us *the Church*; in its faith, and in the precepts and principles by which it is to be guided. The third and fifth thus answer to one another; and form a parenthesis between Christ's first and later actions towards Israel. The two last divisions present both Israel and the Church in their respective moral attitudes, which they continue to hold till the ending of this evil age brings in a new state of things, which issues in the millennial kingdom.

That these are real divisions given of God, and not arbitrarily assumed for a purpose, may I think, be argued from the remarkable order, which, on this supposition, several titles of the Savior assume. Let us take the characteristic one of "Son of Man." This title was taken by our Lord, I suppose, from its previous use by the Psalmist, by Ezekiel, and by Daniel. In the eighth Psalm it is closely connected with Jesus' incarnation and subsequent elevation to the rule over all things. In Ezekiel, the title is closely connected with the prophet's humiliation. He was sent, as was our

Lord, to a stiff-necked nation. He had to unfold a prophecy full of lamentation and woe, to proclaim the sword, famine and pestilence, the siege of Jerusalem, and wrath upon the temple. He had to speak of abominations in the temple, and of flight from the place of judgment. To him was committed reproof of false shepherds, with parables, and riddles; to him were committed the utterance of judgments against the nations; and yet at the conclusion, he gives the tidings of the glory that shall fill God's house and city. Daniel beheld the Son of Man as the Great Ruler of all, appointed by the God of heaven. Our Lord then in using this title, was fulfilling all that was written of His humiliation as the Son of Man, and yet pointing onward to the glories yet to be.

Now this title occurs in the several divisions of Matthew, as follows. In the first, nowhere. In the second, *seven* times. In the third, twice. In the fourth, not once. In the fifth, ten times; making together twelve in the parts which treat of the Church. In the sixth, *seven* times. These seven are distributed in a remarkable order. They occur only in the Prophecy on Mount Olivet. There they are thus found: Thrice in the first half addressed to Jewish disciples; thrice in the parables addressed to the Church; and once in the closing parable concerning the Gentiles. In the last division the title occurs *five* times.

Take also this further evidence. There are in Matthew a number of quotations from Old Testament prophecies relating to the person of our Lord. These fall orderly into their places, on the assumption that these divisions which I have given are real.

In No. 1 there are *four* quotations. Jesus is the Virgin's Son, the ruler of Bethlehem, 'My Son' from Egypt, and the Nazarite. In No. 2 there are also *four*. John makes the way ready for the Lord, He is the Light of Galilee the Bearer of sickness, the Meek One. These are all from the prophet Isaiah.

We come now to the parenthesis which concerns the Church especially. In No. 3 there is but one quota



tion, and that is introductory to the parables. Jesus is the Revealer of Secrets, as was Joseph. (The time of famine is yet to come.) In Nos. 4 and 5 there is no citation.

In No. 6, in which we return again to Israel, there are *four* quotations from her prophets. Jesus is her King, the Comer in the name of Jehovah, the Rejected Stone, the Lord seated on the Father's throne. In No. 7 again there are *four* citations. Jesus is the Smitten Shepherd, the Sold by Israel, His garments parted: while the words of His agony on the cross are taken from the 22nd Psalm. The eight last quotations are derived from Zechariah and the Psalms.

Let us now consider the divisions more closely.

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## PART I.

### MATTHEW I, II.

JESUS is born of the race of Abraham, of the seed of David, as foretold. His birth of the Virgin is the proof that no human power shall avail to prevent His reign over Israel: Is. vii, viii.

His birth is notified by miracle, in the way that Balaam the last prophet of the Gentiles, hinted: Num. xxiv, 17. But neither Jerusalem nor the king of Israel are ready for blessing. The reigning king is an enemy of Messiah, who by craft seeks His life. It is Pharaoh, and the seed of Abraham in Egypt, over again. It is Saul's enmity once more against the anointed David. Flight then is yet again the counsel of God. Had it been resistance, judgment and destruction of the foes must have come in. But that blast of enmity against Jesus having been stilled, the youthful Saviour again enters the land, as 'Jesus the *Nazarite*.'

It is beautiful from this point to notice the connexion of some of the opening chapters of Isaiah. His fifth chapter gives us Israel privileged, but evil, and rejected of God. His sixth tells us of Israel's blindness till the day of destruction, and of the earth's emptying. A remnant only would be spared. The seventh gives us the Virgin's Son, as the proof that the promises to David should never be made void, because upheld by Almighty power. Vainly will the faithlessness of David's house, or the antagonism of foes seek to overturn the purposes of God. The eighth chapter presents the Son of the Prophetess, the Avenger of Israel. But first there must be a day of woe, because of Israel's refusal of Messiah the meek. Then shall arise the false Christ, 'the Wild Beast;' and the confederacy of the nations shall threaten the destruction of Israel. God would effect a separation between Jesus' disciples and the nation at large. The Stone of Stumbling to the refusers of Messiah should be the Sanctuary to the disciple. The ninth chapter tells us of Jesus' first advent, of the light of His teaching in Galilee, of His miracles, and resurrection. By Him the throne of David shall one day be set up, after Israel's oppressors are broken in the battle of fire.

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## PART II.

### CHAPTERS III—XII, 45.

Now opens the proclamation of "the kingdom of heaven," or the millennial "kingdom of God;" first by John the Baptist, and afterwards by our Lord. John cries in the desert of Judea to all Israel, "Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens hath drawn near:" Acts xiii, 24. As God drew near to Israel, when He descended to speak with Moses at the Bush—as He



came near to speak with Israel at Sinai, so the kingdom then drew near to Israel, though afterward it was removed from them: Matt. xxi, 43. God's imputed righteousness and prepared salvation were close at hand: Is. xlvi, 13; li, 5; lvi, 1. It is upon the foundation reared by these that the kingdom of glory is to be set.

Those who received the message of John were by God's authority immersed, confessing sins. What did this intend? It was an open abandonment of the ground of law, in order that the grace of God might come in. He who confessed sin could not be justified by law, or by his own work. He was ready therefore to hail the proclamation of a Saviour's righteousness, and justification by the work of another. It was tacitly a setting free from Moses, in order to their listening to the new teacher, Christ. It testified of a death to hopes from the earth; a hope in the resurrection from the dead. It owned a desire to enter the Messiah's kingdom of glory then first proclaimed. God assumes all, even of Israel, to be guilty,—by the proclamation "*Repent!*" Those therefore who feel and confess guilt, and desire to partake the future kingdom of 'the *Saints*,' must be cleansed,—bathed from head to foot. None but the clean shall enter.

Whence came this phrase, "the kingdom of heaven?" From the prophet Daniel. God had given to David and Solomon rule over the kingdoms of earth, and a city of His choice as the centre of the empire. But this was under conditions; and at length, because of repeated sins, the kingdom is taken away from Israel, the Lord leaves his temple of earth, and allows *that* and His city to be burnt by Gentiles. He retires on high. He gives the kingdom thereupon to the Gentiles, and sets before their first king the course of dominion on earth. After the four empires have completed their periods, "shall THE GOD OF HEAVEN set up a KINGDOM, which shall never be destroyed:" Dan, ii, 44. Hence the future kingdom is called sometimes "*the kingdom of heaven*," and sometimes "the kingdom of

*God*." It is "the kingdom of *heaven*" in opposition to "the kingdoms of *earth*:" Deut. xxviii, 25. Before the time of Nebuchadnezzar, Jehovah was justly addressed as the "*God of all the kingdoms of the earth*:" 2 Kings xix, 15. But in Daniel Jehovah takes the title of "the God of *heaven*," and His kingdom is to be the contrast to "the kingdoms of *men*," and to the kingdom of *Satan*. It is not the gospel, for God's kingdom is to "break in pieces" all other kingdoms: Dan. ii, 44. At one blow of sudden supernatural might from above, Jesus the Descending Stone is to break all other empires, and at once to set up the kingdom of God: Dan. ii, 34, 44.

By this heaven-sent proclamation, John the Baptist mightily stirred the Jewish nation. Multitudes sought eagerly to enter the long-expected kingdom of Messiah's glory and power. But John calls on them not to imagine that, in order to attain a place there, all that was requisite was to be born of Abraham's flesh. No! There must be a new life! The day of wrath would oversweep the earth, and destroy sinners out of it, before the kingdom of glory could come: Matt. iii, 7: Isa. xiii, 6—13. This distinguishes 'the kingdom of God' from the gospel. The gospel is God's message of *mercy* to the world, *before* the coming *wrath* destroys.

In order to enter the manifested kingdom of heaven, it was not enough that the tree sprang from a slip of that olive which was planted by God originally in Eden: it must be a bearer of good fruit, or else, instead of flourishing as a "tree of righteousness" on the earth in its millennial days, (Isa. lxi, 3,\*) it would be cut down and cast into the fire. Moreover, Messiah would sever between those who only in form and hypocrisy took the Christian name. Not all called Christians would have part in that risen glory. The wheat would be separated from the chaff. The evil 'trees' and the 'chaff' are alike destined for the furnace. The good trees and the wheat belong to the kingdom.

\* In Isaiah lxi, the trees of righteousness planted by Jehovah are clearly men of Israel, "mourners in Zion."



The 'trees' in John's message are separated from the 'wheat' by the two baptisms, of water, and of the Spirit. Thus the 'wheat' signifies the disciples of Christ. They are peculiarly His—"He will purge *his* floor." No such word is spoken of the 'trees' by John.

Herein behold the two peoples of God! The *earthly*, comprising Israel and the Gentiles, are represented by the *trees*, which strike deep their roots into the soil, and abide and bear fruit for ages on it. The *heavenly* people of the church are represented by the *wheat*; which is but an annual, and is carried away from the place where it grew to another spot: see Ez. xv, xvii, xxxi; Dan. iv; Isa. lxi, 3; Ps. i, 3.

But the baptism of John was designed to subserve yet another purpose. 'The kingdom of heaven had drawn near.' Who is to be king of this kingdom? God was now dealing with the nation of Israel, as before-time He dealt with the family of Jesse. John the Baptist was the Samuel who was to point out to Israel the king of God's kingdom. Many, many presented themselves before the prophet, but all had to confess sin. "Man looketh on the *eyes*, (*marg.*) but the Lord looketh on the *heart*." John had still to say in spirit, as the troops of candidates passed through the waters, "Neither hath the Lord chosen this:" 1 Sam. xvi.

At length Jesus travels from Nazareth to be baptized by John. John perceives that this is the Righteous One, and hesitates to immerse as a sinner one who has no sin to confess. But Jesus obeys, in order to 'fulfil all righteousness.' It was His Father's command; and taking the sinner's place, He would receive it. Then heaven opens over the earth; and, not John the Baptist, but the Father, anoints His Son with the oil of heaven,—the Spirit without measure. Then comes the Heavenly Father's attestation to His perfection. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Here therefore in the new rite is presented to us the new name of God, on which the dispensation of the church is founded: Matt. xxviii, 19; 2 Cor. xiii, 14

Henceforth into that name are to be immersed believers in the Lord Jesus.

Jesus is next sent by the Spirit to combat Satan in the desert. Adam was Son of God; but Satan soon prevailed against him: Luke iii, 38. Israel was God's Son, His firstborn: but over him also the tempter soon triumphed: Ex. iv, 22. But here is God's only-begotten, well-beloved Son, the Lord from heaven, in whom He was ever well-pleased. Could Satan, that strong wrestler, throw Him? He attempted it, but in vain. Jesus stood His ground as the man, and as the Israelite; answering all temptations by precepts from Deuteronomy—the code given by God of old to Israel. Satan shows Him all the *kingdoms* of the *earth*, and would grant them to Him without the cross. But Jesus will not take them, save from His Father's hand. Nor was that the time.

As the victorious SON OF GOD, Jesus, proceeds to proclaim "the *kingdom of heaven*." As the Great Teacher, possessed of the powers of that coming age, He heralds the day of glory by miracles of healing, and the ejection of demons: iv, 23, 24. For the kingdom of God shall bring to the men of earth long life, like the years of a tree; and shall cast Satan out of his usurped dominion over earth. Will our brethren who make light of the kingdom of God, ponder these words of our Lord? "*I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: FOR THEREFORE AM I SENT:*" Luke iv, 43.\*

Into which department of the kingdom did Jesus seek to introduce "His disciples"—into the *earthlies*? or the *heavenlies*? His title, "Son of God," will tell. In the vision of the empires of earth given to Daniel we read—"THE SAINTS OF THE HEAVENLIES† shall take the kingdom:" Dan. vii, 18, 22.

\* More accurately—"For to this end was I sent." *Απεσταλην*. The true reading.

† So it should be rendered. It is plural: a different expression from that used for "the Most High."



Who were they? Israel were the saints of *the earth*: they were to show it by the cleanness of their meals and their flesh.: Ex. xix, 10, 14; xxii, 31.

Jesus then, in the Sermon on the Mount, and in His subsequent teaching, answers this question. *The heavens were now opened*: the Father in heaven had sent forth *His Son*, anointed by the Holy Ghost, to call sons of God out of earth into the heaven. Jesus at once distinguishes between "the multitudes" of Israel and His "disciples," the men of faith, (vi, 30,) who had His Father as their Father also. We may fairly assume, that all His disciples had accepted the call and baptism of John. The refusers of John and his baptism refused Christ also: Luke vii, 29, 30. These, then, had been baptized into a death to Moses, that they might listen to Christ. The Sermon on the Mount, therefore, is the rule of the baptized into the confession of the Christ who was to come after John; the rule of those taught of the Spirit. For the Holy Ghost was poured on our Lord without measure; and the Spirit, after Jesus' resurrection, could not unsay what Christ had said before His resurrection. *Ten new commands* replace the old of Moses. The Sermon on the Mount gives us the Saviour's sayings, and the Heavenly Father's will. We are to be perfect as He is. Can we rise beyond that? Moreover, the Saviour speaks at the end as the Judge that is to decide who, as the obedient, shall enter the kingdom of His glory.

Those Beatitudes with which the Sermon begins are all in covert contrast to the standing and blessings of the law. The *poor in spirit*, who are to enter the heavenly department of the kingdom are opposed to those who, in the confidence of the flesh, caught at the conditions of the Old Covenant, and vowed, "All that the Lord hath said, we will do." The *mourners* on earth are unlike those who were thrice a year to *rejoice* before Jehovah in their feasts; yea, in whatever they put their hand unto: Deut. xii, 7; xiv, 26; xvi, 14, 15. The *meek* and the *merciful* are the contrast to those whose principle it was, that they should maintain

and obtain their rights; who if smitten, were to take the assailant before the judges, that he might be smitten in turn: Ex. xxi, 25. The *pure in heart* are the contrasts to the pure in *flesh*, and in their *raiment*: Ex. xix, 10, 14. The *peace-makers* are in covert opposition to the *war-makers* and warriors under Moses and Joshua: Deut. xx. Jesus' disciples were not to expect glory on earth from the men of earth, but rejection, calumny, and suffering for Christ's sake. This was again in contrast to the law's promises: Deut. xxviii, 13; iv, 6. Not that there was any enmity between Jesus on the one hand, and Moses and the prophets on the other. On the contrary, those of old who had suffered\* for righteousness' sake should, no less than the disciples of Jesus, take their places in the millennial kingdom: Matt. v, 10, 12. The law and the prophets were good, but they made nothing perfect. Their principle was justice; but Jesus came to bring the heavenly principle of grace: John i, 17.

Israel was now therefore taken down from its former place of witness. It was henceforth darkness, needing to be illumined by these new lights of the world: Luke xvi, 8; 2 Cor. vi, 4; Eph. v, 8. Israel was corrupt, needing to be preserved from putrefaction by this new salt of heaven. But the failure also of the church is shown in the salt's becoming tasteless; after which it is not to be restored; while Israel is. Also Luke xiv, 34, 35. The distinctive visible mark of Moses' disciple was the fringe of blue on the dress: Num. xv, 38. The distinctive mark of a disciple of Jesus is the spiritual one of love: John xiv, 15; xv, 12.

1. But some one may object—'To the meek is promised the inheritance of *earth*:' v. 5. True; and yet the "reward" is "*in heaven*:" v. 12. Jesus will hold both the earth and the heaven, as King of both. Happy they who rule with him: their home in heaven, their sphere of rule the earth! Rev. v, 10; Heb. xi, 8, 16.

\* Perfect participle, v. 10.



2. It may be objected again—‘Jesus speaks of the altar and the gift brought thither v. 23, 24. Is not that Jewish?’ Jesus is now offering to Israel a place in the heavenly kingdom. And He bids them for the present observe the inferior ceremonial laws of Moses: v. 19. But He adds, that whoever should refuse the new and loftier standard of morals which He here sets forth, should not have part in the heavenly portion of the millennial kingdom: v. 20.

Jesus then is establishing a new people, a new doctrine, a new reward. He presents a new object,—God as the Heavenly Father, by whose new principle of grace disciples were to be guided; from whose hands they were to seek their reward in the day of the kingdom: vi, 1—18. The Son of the Father in heaven therefore contrasts his sayings with those of the Law. ‘Moses said thus to Israel;\* but I say to you.’ Hence oaths, lawsuits, magistracy, divorce, and treasures on earth are forbidden to his disciples. Sons of the Heavenly Father are to obey the Father, and to seek his kingdom and glory as their reward: vi, 33. Theirs is not the old sabbath, but a new rest prepared for the people of God.

Jesus teaches to the sons of God prayer, in its power, and its encouragements. He who prayed under law was to use a set form, asserting his perfect righteousness. He had done all God’s commands; he had forgotten none, he had transgressed none: Deut. xxvi, 12—15. Then he was entitled to ask Jehovah, the God of Israel, to *look down* from his *habitation, the heaven*, and to bless God’s people, Israel, and the portion of *earth* which Jehovah had given as their portion. But Jesus alters all that. Now, the disciples own themselves sinners; but they are forgiven, and are entitled children of God, looking for His kingdom, which shall embrace earth and heaven. They get on earth provision from day to day; for they are pilgrims and strangers, till the better, that is the heavenly country, is reached.

\* ’Tis not “*by* them of old time.” But “*to* them,” as the margin gives it.

There are some indeed who would set this all aside, as not for the Church, but for the remnant of Israel in the latter days. Now, I deny not that there will be this remnant, results of a future mission to the cities of Israel: Matt. x, 23; Is. xl. But I am sure, that this Sermon is the rule of the Son of the heavenly Father, given to sons of God who would enter the kingdom of God. To whom are we to listen? “THIS IS MY BELOVED SON: HEAR HIM.” Is Christ our *Teacher*? (“Master.”) Then we are to be His disciples, and obey His words. Jesus takes this title, and expects our obedience: (Matt. xxvi, 18; John xiii, 13, 14.)

It is true, that the Holy Ghost had not yet descended on the saints. But *what* was the Holy Spirit, when he had come down, to teach? Whatever Jesus had said! “Make disciples (to Jesus) of all the nations, and immerse them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, *teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you:*” xxviii, 19, 20; John xiv, 26. Did the people of God cease to be *disciples of Christ* after the Holy Spirit’s descent? Hear what the Spirit says: “Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against *the disciples of the Lord*, went to the High Priest:” Acts ix, 1. “*The disciples were* (divinely) called *Christians* first in Antioch:” xi, 26. They were called Christians, because followers of Christ. They kept the Lord’s Supper, because Jesus had commanded it: Acts ii, 42; xx, 1, 2, 7. “*If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed, And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free:*” John viii, 31. The precepts of the Epistles are but an enforcement of the Saviour’s previous commands.

Next comes (Matt. viii, ix) the *power* of grace, sustaining the *doctrine* of grace as taught by our Lord. Twelve specimens of it are given, but we must not notice all.

1. When God of old entered the camp of Israel as the Lord of justice, to deal with them according to their deserts, He gave orders that the leper should be put outside the place where He dwelt: Num. v. Even Miriam,



when so smitten, is set outside the camp of Israel seven days. Nor can Moses heal her of his own will, though she is his sister. But here is one come to dwell with men, who allows the leper to come close to him; and who touches him, saying, '*I will: be clean!*' God is dealing now not with the flesh, as of old, but with the spirit. And faith of the heart swallows up uncleanness of the flesh: Matt. viii, 1—4. 'Go, offer Moses' gift! Let the priests know that *Jehovah-Ropha* has come, and has filled up the gaps of the law.' For Moses' priests were both to detect leprosy, and also to own its cleansing, by an especial service. *But they were not directed how to cleanse it!* Now, however, the Cleanser—"I am the Lord that healeth thee"—is come!

2. The Law refused the *Gentile* as uncircumcised, unclean. But now the Roman centurion asks a favour of Jesus, and is accepted and praised. The Roman is greater than any of his own people, Israel. Faith is now the question. The men of faith, though Gentiles, shall troop from east and west; and be owned as sons of Abraham in resurrection, when the kingdom of God is come. But the men of unbelief, called to receive this kingdom, but refusing it, shall, even though Jews in flesh, be cast out. Here *resurrection* is seen to be the disciples' hope; and patriarchs and the Church of Christ shall be joined in the kingdom which enters with the trump of resurrection.

3. Again, Jesus heals on the sabbath. The Law could give neither healing nor rest. Nor could Israel's observance of it keep out disease, according to Jehovah's conditional promise: Ex. xv, 26. But the promised Deliverer is to bear away disease and to cast out demons, as well as to remove sin.

4. He is seen forgiving sin; and asserts His right so to do. They who hear are astonished; for there was neither visible temple, priest, nor sacrifice. He forgives not a sin of ignorance alone; but all sins, all previous offences of the palsied one: and the removal of his palsy is the proof, that Jesus' words are no vain boast, ix, 1. The forgiveness of sins! This is the

joy of the Church of Christ, (Eph. i,) as yet unattained by Israel: Acts iii, 19.

5. The Saviour calls to His service the publican, and sits down at the feast He spreads, surrounded by other publicans. This is not law, but grace! the physician entering into the hospital, not as rejoicing in disease, but as its healer.

But a question arises—"How was it that Jesus' disciples were feasting, when the Pharisees' and John's disciples were fasting?" Jesus answers—first, that His presence as the Bridegroom made fasting unsuitable then. But He replies to the question also as a matter of religious expediency. This proposed addition of a new fast to those of the law would only produce new strifes among the men of law.

Moreover, from another point of view, it would be folly. For each religious doctrine requires ceremonies adapted to it. The rites of the Law were wisely suited to express its doctrine. The old skins suited the old wine. *Law's subjects were a people of the flesh; its heritage was the earth. But Jesus' doctrine was new wine, and it demanded new rites to express it.* His disciples were men of faith, and their heritage is in heaven. Hence Jesus, as the Wisdom of God, devises *baptism*, to express His subjects' burial to the earth, resurrection to newness of life, and expectation of the kingdom which is to come at the resurrection of the just.

"They put new wine into new bottles, and *both\* are preserved.*" Jesus has refused to mix up His new gospel doctrine with the old Jewish rites. The effect of that would be to ruin both doctrines. Jesus in His wisdom would find new skins to contain His new doctrine, *and then the Law with its rites would move on side by side with the Gospel, and its rites.* And so it occurred in fact, as the Acts discover. The sabbath, circumcision, the synagogue, the feasts, went on as before; though ten thousands of the men of Jerusalem

\* *Ἀμφότεροι*. The true reading.



were believers in Christ Jesus, and observed baptism, the Supper of the Lord, and the Lord's day.

In this passage then behold Jesus *owning at once the Law and the Gospel; the men of the Law, and disciples of the Church.* God has not deserted Israel finally, though the Church has come in. The presence of the Church is no swallowing up of Israel. The two sets of bottles and their two kinds of wine are both to be preserved. Here are, in figure, Abraham's two sons; both of the bondmaid, and of the freewoman: Gal. iv. So important is this passage, that it is given in Mark and Luke also; in Luke, with some additional matter: Mark ii, 22; Luke v, 37, 38.

But at once upon Jesus' utterance of these words, He gives an illustration, or typifying of the truth, by facts.

Whilst He speaks a ruler enters, and adores Him, asking Him to raise his daughter just dead. Jesus goes forth for the purpose, but while he is on the way, a woman unclean *twelve years* by an issue of blood, for whose cleansing many have prescribed in vain, comes, and touches the fringe of Jesus' robe. Faith lays hold on the righteousness of Christ, and at once becomes righteous. This then is, in a figure, Israel the unrighteous at length justified by faith, after long and vain attempts at being justified by works.

Jesus advances next to raise the dead. But it is done in secret. Seven persons alone are present, when the first resurrection takes place. The wailing crowd, as being full of unbelief, are driven out of the house. It is a damsel of *twelve years* of age, which is in a moment recovered by the Lord's word—'Damsel, arise!' Here is the resurrection of the Church. The *maid* began to live, when the *woman* began to be unclean—even as the *Church* has stepped in when *Israel* was rejected, as refusing the Lord her righteousness. The cleansing of the woman takes place in public, after her active touch; the raising of the other takes effect in private, by the touch of Christ. What shall the receiving of Israel be, but "life from the dead?" Rom. xi. The Bridegroom has equal power over the un-

cleanness of Israel, and the slumbers of the disciples of the Church. "The maid is not dead, but slumbering."

The Saviour then heals two blind men who confess Him as Son of David. Israel, become righteous by faith, shall see the Lord to be also their king.

The Pharisees blaspheme the Holy Spirit, which is the unpardonable sin. Thus, when the true Christ comes in His full power to save, the wicked are shut up in judicial blindness and perdition: 2 Thess. ii.

Matthew x. The Saviour, now that cleansing, forgiveness, and the resurrection from the dead are come, sends out the twelve as witnesses *to Israel* of the near approach which the kingdom has made. They are the twelve spies who have searched the land, and come laded with some of its fruits, to bid Israel enter in. "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, *raise the dead, cast out devils.*" Happy and powerful the kingdom to come, if these are its firstfruits!

But all would not receive these tidings of grace. Woeful would be their lot in the day of judgment! The Gentiles and their kings would draw themselves up in array at last against the truth. Hence there would be need of courage to confess Christ even unto death. While the kingdom is being proclaimed, it is not the period of *peace upon earth.* There are many wolves; how should the sheep be at peace? But when the Lord has arrived in the power of His kingdom, and the new covenant is ratified with Judah and Israel, then comes "the covenant of peace" on earth: Ezek. xxxiv, 35; xxxvii, 26; Hag. ii, 9.

But though this mission was directly and primarily to Israel, many of the principles apply to the Church. Paul could even shake off the dust from his feet against refusers of the gospel of grace: Acts xiii, 51; xviii, 6. The Church has still to testify of the coming of the kingdom of God: Acts xiv, 22; xix, 8; xx, 25; xxviii, 23, 31; viii, 12.

In Matthew xi we see John Baptist shaken, because the kingdom, in its destruction of sinners, (such as he



had foretold it, Matt. iii,) had not come. 'Could this peaceful Jesus be the Messiah who was to break in pieces kings and nations?' Jesus refers John in reply to Isaiah xxxv. The Great and Terrible Day of the Lord is in the foregoing chapter foretold, in its destruction of Israel's Gentile foes. The thirty-fifth chapter tells of the glory to be brought to Israel by their God. Then the very desert of Arabia shall be filled with trees and rivers. Yes! Jesus was their "God," who would come with "vengeance and recompence!" He was proving it then by those works of mercy and power on the sons of men which Isaiah predicted; although as yet His hand was not put forth to cut off the ungodly, or to give blessing to the land of promise.

Jesus then speaks to the multitudes about John. His coming had made the separation between the converted of Israel, and the unconverted, very marked. John's advent had introduced a new dispensation; that of the *preaching* (or heralding) of the millennial kingdom. Great would be the glories of that empire; and wise were they, who were like armed men seeking to break into the rich city set before them, and to divide its spoils. Amidst the born of women many had been great, and John was equal to the greatest of them. But there is also a birth from the *tomb*, and an entrance thereby on the heavenly glories of the millennial day. The least of those who had a portion there would be far greater than John then was.

But John's message had drawn more fully into light "the generation,"\* and its unbelief: ver. 16. The seed of the serpent was hissing against the wisdom of God as manifested by the missions respectively, of John, and of Jesus. Those refusers of the true water of the rock and the manna would perish in the desert, as did their fathers. Those refusers of the kingdom, in spite of Jesus' calls to repentance, attested by miracles so many

\* The first occasion on which our Lord names it.

and so powerful, would be swallowed up by a doom more awful than that of the cities of the plain.

Jesus' reply then to the messengers of John is, in substance, this—that while the Lord recognized the kingdom in its day of manifestation and of justice *as yet to come*, yet that *for the present* there was a dispensation of *mercy*—in which the kingdom would be proclaimed, and the questions decided, both *who* were to enter the kingdom of resurrection, and what rank in it each was to attain.

This dispensation of mystery is the time of "the *word* of the kingdom;" it is the time of the Church. Accordingly at this point Jesus introduces part of the new name, of God—"the Father," and "the Son." Also the Saviour recognizes, that He was teaching a new doctrine;—that for the Church. Moses' yoke was heavy, it gave no rest: Acts xv, 10; Gal. v. But *the Lord's yoke* was to be accepted by those who believed in the kingdom to come; and they should find rest. *We are brought out from under law, that we may obey Christ's words:* 27—30. But if so, then the Sermon on the Mount is part of Christ's regulations for His Church.

In Matthew xii arises the question about the sabbath. The vipers of Satan's seed, the men of this present evil age defended the old rest; though they were witnesses that it brought with it no love, no sanctification to them, and no real rest to the Seed of the Woman, or his disciples. And the man of the withered hand was a witness, that its rest did not exclude trouble, and could not bring healing, or arrest death. Jesus then would, as the Son of Man, introduce tokens of grace and of the powers of "the age to come"—"the sabbath *rest* that remaineth for the people of God" in holiness, and in resurrection.

They plot against His life; but He does not plead to God against them, as did Moses against Dathan and Abiram. They blaspheme the Holy Spirit, by whose finger the demons of Satan were ejected from men. But Jesus does not, as in the days of Moses, call for stones to stone the blasphemers; though He warns



all, that deliberate verbal insult against the Holy Spirit is the sin that cannot be forgiven.

By these bitter speeches the evil generation was showing itself; it was inexcusable, and would be condemned by all those, who with far less light, in earlier days had walked aright. The one standing test of men would be—the resurrection of the Son of Man. He who believed it, entered into the Church of Christ: Rom. x; 1 Cor. xv. He who refused it, was condemned already. Moreover the condition of these malicious and lustful ones would be far worse at the close of this age, when—the Church being removed—all power should be given to Satan to enter in, and seduce them to unbelief and to blasphemy: 2 Thess. ii. Though the spirit of idolatry seemed to have left Israel, (and, since then, some of the nations,) yet at the time of crisis it would return in its most fearful shape, with seven-fold power of the Wicked One.

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### PART III.

#### THE MYSTERY OF THE KINGDOM. (*Prophetical.*)

##### MATT. XII, 46—XIII.

AFTER the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost a second time committed, Jesus puts aside the ties of the flesh—not those alone which bound Him to His own nation, but those also which knit Him to His mother's family. The multitudes assure Him that His mother and brethren are outside. He declares that it is His obedient disciples who are now His brethren. This includes the Church.

The Saviour next alters His mode of teaching the multitudes: it is no longer direct, but in parables.

Israel is blind, as was foretold. The light on the Great Prophet's face is too strong for the people. So Jesus puts on a veil: the Time of Mystery has come. The people of Messiah, who should have welcomed Him, have thrust Him aside. The kingdom in manifestation, the kingdom as promised to Israel, cannot therefore come, till the great and dreadful day of the Lord has cut off the rebels.

There is this peculiarity about the view of the kingdom given in this chapter—it describes a kingdom's state *while the King is away*. That is an anomalous position for a kingdom, resembling the case of England when Charles the Second was driven from the realm. He could not then be properly said to reign, though he might be said to have a kingdom in secret. Or take the scriptural instance of David: he was anointed king long ere he appeared on the throne. But the period during which Saul was still swaying the sceptre which he had forfeited, is not reckoned as really part of David's reign. Jesus was at His baptism anointed King; but He would not plead as yet against Herod. He came to try if there were any fruit on Israel's fig-tree. He found none. Hence He begins a new work—He is the *Sower*, scattering wheat for the future harvest. This confirms our view of Matt. iii. First comes the tree, then the barn-floor. But while the 'trees' will need the discrimination of the axe, the 'floor' will need that of the fan.

Jesus then proceeds to trace in seven parables the course and order of events during this time of the KINGDOM IN MYSTERY. The first four give us Christendom as seen by God.

1. In the *Sower*, Jesus discovers to us the results of "*the word of the kingdom:*" v. 19. The preaching of the millennium will produce, in but one class of hearers out of four, the suitable fruit. For there are three great foes to its reception—the devil, the world, the flesh. These blight the genuine results in three instances out of every four.

2. The *Wheat* and *Tares* present to us the mixture of true and false Christians which would be found in



the world, up to the crisis of His coming. Jesus, as head of the millennial kingdom, sends forth the true doctrine. But Satan raises up those who in appearance receive it, but are still unchanged. No efforts of real Christians can undo this work of the devil. The tares are to be left, till angels root them *out of the world*. The parable begins with Jesus' first coming, and ends with His second advent.

Satan's work will be undone at the end, when Jesus descends in power. Angels will seize upon the living sons of men who were originally Christians by profession, but really unrenewed. They will clear the earth of the inanimate instruments of sin, as well as of evil men. The cleared world will become the kingdom of "the Son of *man*:" v. 41. The righteous caught up into the heaven as the ripened wheat, will shine out from the heaven "as the sun in the kingdom of *their Father*." Here then the Church is included. The Church is found among 'the children of the kingdom' gathered in during Israel's blindness; (11, 16, 17;) and to them belongs the superior and heavenly glory.

3. The *Mustard-seed* describes the worldly system of splendour, wealth, and power—vying even with the glory of the kings of the earth—which has sprung out of the Saviour's unearthly teaching. 4. The *Leaven* manifests the false doctrine which accompanies this worldly system, and which will finally leaven all national establishments.

Thus Jesus introduces new views as to the future. "I will utter things which have been *kept secret* since the foundation of the world:" v. 35. In this time of secrecy stands the Church. Isaiah, in his sixth chapter, had foretold, that during Israel's blindness sore calamities should befall the earth. "Cities should be wasted without inhabitant, and houses without man, and the land (earth) be utterly desolate:" v. 11. But in our Lord's words are discoveries of a new dispensation, and of the spiritual state of the "Gentiles on whom God's name is called." How then were the *new* to be understood, in relation to the *old* prophecies? "Therefore," (said Jesus) "every scribe instructed in the king-

dom of heaven\* is like unto a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasury things new and old." That is, the Old Testament prophecies about the *kingdom in manifestation* are not rendered null by the New Testament predictions about the *kingdom in mystery*. *The one aspect is distinct from the other*; but both are alike to be used by the wise steward, as food for the servants of his Master's household. Here then is rebuked that school of interpretation, which teaches that the *Old Testament prophets* spoke of the *kingdom in mystery*, or of the *Church*. They did not: it was a *secret*, as is here stated; and as is affirmed by Paul: Eph. iii.

In those climates the householder is oft able to set at once on the table the dried figs and grapes of last year, by the side of fresh figs and grapes just gathered from the tree. Each class is distinct from the other in look and taste, yet each is wholesome and excellent. He then is not a scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven, who does not discern at once the kingdom *in mystery* as the *new* thing, and the kingdom *in manifestation* as the *old* thing presented to Israel's prophets.

In a previous page we have seen that Jesus distinguishes two sets of *doctrine*—His own, and that of Moses. Here He puts forth two sets of *prophecy* also; that of Israel's prophets, and His own. His own prophecies foretell the results of the preaching of His own doctrine, and discover the great features of Christendom, or of the visible body which professes Christianity.

The Saviour's family comes again into notice, and the men of Nazareth wonder why Jesus, the first-born, should be so wondrously unlike and superior to the rest of His brothers and sisters? There was nothing surprising about Mary's other sons. "Whence then hath this man all these things?"

\* See Tregelles' reading.



## PART IV.

MATTHEW XIV—XVI, 12.

HERALD OF KINGDOM SLAIN. NO REPENTANCE.

To Pharaoh God sent Moses and Aaron. Before Herod John the Baptist and Jesus stood. Pharaoh threatened Moses ; but Herod slays one of God's chief messengers. Jesus considers it time then to flee into the desert—as Moses of old did, in like circumstances. When the multitudes follow Him, as they followed Moses, He feeds them in the wilderness, as did the leader of Israel. Moses by his rod divides the waves ; but Jesus walks upon them in the hour of tempest, and gives power to Peter to do the same. The wind ceases as they enter the ship ; and the men on board pay our Lord adoration, as the Son of God.

Jesus refuses the traditions of Israel and declares its worship unacceptable to God, as being merely that of the outer man. He asserts a principle of cleanness which subverts the old one of the cleanness of the flesh. He staggers thereby the men of law. But His church accepts it.

A woman of Canaan addresses Jesus as "Son of David." It was a wrong title for any but an Israelite to use ; the Son of David has but the sword for the people of Canaan. Jesus therefore declares that His mission is to Israel alone, and not to the Gentiles. But faith wins a crumb from the Lord : Rom. xv, 8. Israel are the sheep of God's pasture, but lost. The dogs are Gentiles. But the "dog" of faith has now become the son. 'The children of the kingdom' are become "dogs : " Phil. iii, 2.

The evil generation tempts Jesus ; but no sign save His death and resurrection is to be given. The disciple

must stand aloof from the leaven of the evil generation in its two main forms—that of the Pharisee, who adds his own traditions to God's word ; and that of the Sadducee, who clips off from it whatever displeases him.

## PART V.

MATTHEW XVI, 13—XX, 29.

MYSTERY OF THE KINGDOM (PRACTICAL.) RULES FOR THE CHURCH.

THE Saviour inquires of His disciples what Israel thought of Him, and finds it mere unbelief and blindness. But what said disciples ? "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God." Here is the confession of one beloved of the Father, and enlightened by Him. This is the faith of the church in Christ slain and risen : and now at once Jesus proceeds to promise that upon Himself, as the rock, proved impregnable in resurrection, He would build His *Church* : 1 John iv, 14, 15 ; v, 1, 13, 20. Accordingly, at Pentecost, through the power of the Spirit sent down from on high to testify of the risen and ascended Head, the church began to be.

As yet "the gates of Hadees" (not "Hell") detain in custody the souls of those who shall have part in millennial bliss. Once Samson, the judge of Israel, was detained by the shut gates of Gaza. But rising at midnight he bore them away, and gained his triumph over them. Had any been fellow-prisoners with him, he had delivered them also.

But when the souls of the saved are released out of Hadees, the question arises—'Shall they enter the millennial kingdom ?' Jesus shows therefore, that not



all those possessed of the Church's faith will attain the kingdom. For He gives to Peter the keys of admittance into, or exclusion from, that kingdom. Now some were by apostles adjudged to be put out of the Church, and therefore put out of the kingdom of glory when it arises. Apostles' decisions during the day of mystery, will be confirmed by Jesus in the day of the kingdom's manifestation.

The Saviour then lays down His title of "the Christ," to take up instead that of "Son of Man." As Israel knew Him not, they would reject Him and slay; but the third day He would rise again. Peter refuses the testimony, and is heavily rebuked. Jesus takes occasion thence to teach disciples of the time of the Mystery that they must expect, and will receive like treatment with Himself, even unto death. They might escape such suffering now, but it would be loss of millennial glory in the day of the first resurrection. Suffering for and with Christ is the church's portion. "Through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom of God" in its day of manifest glory. "If we suffer we shall jointly reign:" Acts xiv, 22; 2 Tim. ii, 12. This recovery of all that we lost for Christ's sake is to take place when the Son of Man comes in glory, and gives to each of His disciples according to their works.

The Saviour's words in the end of this chapter discover to us a twofold glory. Jesus comes in the glory of *His Father*, as Son of *God*; and in *His own* kingdom, as the Son of *Man*: xvi, 27. Then follows the promise that some of those present should, ere they died, "see the Son of Man coming in *His kingdom*." As Mark gives it, "they should see *the kingdom of God come in power*:" ix, 1. Luke's expression is very similar: ix, 27. This was fulfilled in the transfiguration of our Lord, which occurred upon the *seventh* day after the promise. Three of the apostles were taken secretly by night to the top of a lofty mountain; and there the appearance of Jesus was altered, His face shining as the sun, His raiment white

as the light. He has companions in glorified bodies like His own; and they are the head of the Law, and the chief of the prophets. But *they* talk with *Jesus*, not He with them. And it is about the work that the Saviour is about to fulfil at Jerusalem that they converse.

Moses was the witness of the earthly glory of the Law. Yet after tarrying amidst the heavenly things and in the presence of God's glory forty days, his own face, by its attraction of light, shone. But here in Jesus' case is glory bursting from within, not borrowed from without.

Peter foolishly proposes to constitute three heads of the kingdom, and to make a tent for each. But the Father rebukes instantly the folly, and pronounces of Jesus—"This is *my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased*, HEAR HIM." Jesus is not only the head of the kingdom, when His sceptre shall be swayed on earth; but now also the Father in heaven commends Him to all sons of God, as the teacher of all that believe during the Time of Mystery. The Son came to reveal the Father. The Father bids His sons under the gospel to listen to His Son's precepts. Here is the heavenly glory of the Son of God, rejected by man and slain, but accepted by God the Father. It is to this scene that Peter turns, when he would stir up the church to bring forth the fruits of faith. He sets before them the transfiguration, as the proof that Jesus' coming, and kingdom of power and glory were no mere fables: 2 Peter i. *They then who would obtain the glory of the millennial kingdom are to obey the Lord Jesus as His disciples.* Moses and Elijah depart—Jesus abides: Matt. xxviii, 20; Rev. iii, 8; John xiv, 15, 21; xv, 7, 10, 14; Acts ix, 1; xx, 35; Col. iii, 16; Heb. ii, 2; 1 John ii, 1—7.

This heavenly glory of the kingdom is that hope of the Church, which is to sustain it in its conflict with Satan, and in its sufferings and from the world. They who have lost this hope have had their faith overthrown: 2 Tim. ii, 12, 18.



That scene was, by Jesus' desire, to be kept secret *till after His resurrection from the dead*: ver. 9. That is, it is a heavenly glory; the glory of the risen in the kingdom of their Father. Then follows a beautiful example of the principle stated by Jesus in the thirteenth chapter, that the Old Testament prophecies are not overturned by the new disclosures. That which the Scribes taught from the Old Testament about the coming of the literal Elijah was true. "Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things." But the unbelief of Israel, and God's dispensation of mercy, had made a second coming of Jesus necessary. Before Jesus' first coming in grace, John the Baptist had come, "in the spirit and power of Elijah," but not the Elijah expected and foretold, (John i, 21.) As it was the day of grace, this Elias, instead of slaying, was slain; even as the Lord Himself would be by and bye. Then the disciples saw, that the Scribes were right in teaching the coming of the literal Elijah. But they saw also, that Elijah, in a certain sense, had already appeared to introduce Jesus; and that that Elijah was John Baptist. Their ancient views are not overturned; but new ones are added. The Spirit notices only the additional one which they derived from our Lord's words.

There are *seven* present again in this second Companionship with Jesus. Three are in bodies glorified,—Jesus, Moses, Elijah. Three are still in the flesh—Peter, James, and John. And over all speaks the Father from His excellent cloud of glory. Moses represents the sleepers in Christ awaked from the dead: Elijah, those alive and remaining unto the Lord's coming: 1 Thess. iv. This scene instructs us also what is meant by the Lord's "Presence," of which we read so oft. It is His personal presence, in His body of glory, after leaving the throne of the Father.\*

\* As the Greek word is usually translated '*coming*,' I give its occurrences, where it refers to Christ's presence, for the sake of the English reader. Matt. xxiv, 27, 37, 39; 1 Cor. xv, 23; 1 Thess. ii, 19; iii, 13; iv, 15; v, 23; 2 Thess. ii, 1, 8; James v, 7, 8; 2 Peter i, 16; iii, 4, 12; 1 John ii, 28.

The favored three descend with our Lord on the next day to the foot of the mountain. And *there* is shown, in type, a picture of the world's state, when the Lord Jesus shall appear. One possessed by a demon had been brought to the nine disciples who were left below; but they had not been able to dispossess the enemy, who, at irregular intervals, left the lad, and then again returned at his pleasure. Here the history illustrates the previous parable of the Evil Spirit, and the last state of the evil generation. The father, in a very doubting mood, beseeches Jesus to deliver His Son. Our Lord descends with rebuke. "Faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you?" But He commands, and the spirit leaves the lad. "Enter no more into him." The devil must be ejected from among men, ere the kingdom of God can come: Rev. xx.

For a considerable space henceforward, Jesus is occupied with giving directions to *the Church*; and they who will accept the command of the Father in heaven, will listen to the Son as their Teacher.

1. After the demon is ejected, the disciples enquire,—'Why they could not cast him out?' Our Lord replies, that it was owing to want of faith; and yet that there were demons of a stronger kind, which could not be ejected, save by the use of special means—such as prayer and fasting. He proceeds then in this place to teach us, that the faith which produces miracles ought to belong to disciples; as he does also in Mark xvi, 15—18. So does Paul teach the Church in his *universal* epistle sent to Corinth: 1 Cor. xii, 7, 9; xiv, 1, 12, 13; i, 2.

2. The collectors enquire of Peter,—'Would Jesus pay the half-shekel tribute to the temple of the God of Israel?' Peter replied that he would, unknowing how much the act involved. For, except the Saviour had expounded the matter, a strong objection against the Christian's standing might have arisen from this circumstance. Paul argues from Abraham's paying tithes to Melchizedec, that both Abraham and his priestly son Levi payed tithes to this priest-king, and



therefore owned themselves his inferiors. To us, then, it might, but for this word of explanation, have been objected,—‘You disciples of Jesus speak of yourselves as priests and kings to God, and as occupying a far higher level than the kings and priests of the Law—and yet, here you are found, together with your High Priest, paying taxes to the priesthood and temple of Israel. That priesthood therefore you own as superior to yourselves, and that temple as superior to your temple above!’ Hearken, then, to the Saviour. He claims exemption from this tax, as the *Son* of Him who enacted the law. But He puts disciples on the same footing with Himself in this matter. “Then are the *children* free. Notwithstanding lest *we* should stumble them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a stater (*marg.*) that take and give unto *them* for *me and thee.*” Here Jesus pays at once, and with one coin, for Himself and the disciple. He is our Surety, who discharges all claims upon us. See, too, how He distinguishes between Israel and the Church. “Give *them* for *me and thee.*” Notice also the contrast between this and the case of Israel; when the insidious enquiry is pressed on our Lord, whether taxes ought to be paid to the heathen emperor? Jesus decides, that Israel is to *discharge its own debts.* They are under the power of the Gentiles, because of unbelief.

3. But lest it should be imagined (as many are now imagining,) that this grace of the Saviour sets the disciple free from all responsibility for his own acts in the day of justice to come, the next chapter is devoted to instructing us concerning the solemn effects entailed upon us by our actions after we believe in Christ. The apostles had been contending among themselves by the way, which of them should be chief in the kingdom of glory. Unable to effect the adjustment of their respective pretensions, they refer to our Lord the question—‘Which of them should be the greatest in His future kingdom?’ His reply is a startling one—‘Ex-

cept they forsook this ambitious rivalry,\* and these evil strivings, becoming like little children, they should *not enter the kingdom at all*, apostles though they were!’ Not the proud, but the meek, are to have part in the kingdom of the saints. The most humble, therefore, during the time of the kingdom in mystery, shall be the most elevated when the kingdom in manifestation is come. These strifes for pre-eminence, and other stumbling-blocks to the world would indeed surely arise, but woe to the disciple that occasioned them! Woe also to the disciple whose misconduct should cause the young Christian to stumble! Better he should die by the most violent of deaths now, than so offend: v. 6.

In order not so to stumble others, keep under the flesh! Else offences against the Church and the world will arise, and Jesus, in the day of judgment, will have to dispense a suitable recompense.

In the case of a personal offence received from a brother, the Christian offended is to go alone to the brother, and set his guilt before him. If that succeeds not, one or two are to go with the plaintiff, and to state the case anew. If that prevail not, “tell it unto *the Church*, but if he neglect to hear *even the Church*, let him be unto thee as an heathen and a publican.” In these words Jesus puts aside for His disciples the old courts of Israel and of the world. Now that apostles<sup>†</sup> are not found on earth, there is no higher court of appeal than the local assembly of believers. Here<sup>†</sup> then we come upon two more occurrences of that word which becomes so important in the Acts, and in the Epistles. It is a proof that the Saviour is now occupied with rules for disciples of His assembly. Jesus promises to ratify on high, and in reference to the future kingdom, whatever His local assemblies shall rightly adjudge in matters of difference between brethren. This subject is enlarged upon by Paul in 1 Cor. v and

\* It is not—“be converted.” They were so already. It is, ‘Except ye turn.’



vi. Our Saviour further promises to be present with all assemblies met unto His name, how few soever their numbers might be. Moreover for them He would intercede, and bring to pass their petitions. Are not these two verses, (19 and 20,) in force now, as the warrant on which disciples of the Church may meet? Here then, again, we have a proof that Jesus is speaking to the Church.

But if one brother offended often against his fellow, how long was he to be borne with, and forgiven? The Redeemer replies in effect, that whenever the offender sought forgiveness, he must be forgiven. For if the Christian do not forgive his brethren's offences against him, Christ's heavenly Father will not forgive such an one his offences as a servant. And if any be an unforgiven servant, there can be no entry for him into the kingdom of reward. Very awful are the Saviour's words about such.

4. In Matt. xix, Jesus repeals for His people the liberty of divorce, save for fornication. Any offending against this rule, will be dealt with in the great day as adulterers. That is sure, though the government of England may have legalized such divorce. 'But was not that too strict a rule? Were it not better, if such was the law of Christ, not to wed at all?' Jesus admits that it would, in certain special cases, be best not to marry: it would be attended with peculiar honour in the coming kingdom, and it was good to seek that honour: v. 12. The full force of this is exhibited in the opening verses of Rev. xiv. Here is something not 'Jewish,' but in perfect contrast with its blessings. "There shall nothing cast their young, nor be barren, in thy land:" Ex. xxiii, 26. "Thou shalt be blessed above all people; there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle:" Deut. vii, 14. "He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the Lord:" Ps. cxiii, 9.

5. Little children are brought to Jesus, and He allows them to come to Him. For they who enter His millennial kingdom must resemble them.

6. The case of the rich young man which follows is very instructive in its bearing upon our question. It is so important, as to be given by Mark and Luke also. The young man enquired of the Saviour what good things he was to do in order to obtain *eternal life*? Jesus points him to the second table of the Ten Commandments of Moses, and to the general statement of duty towards a neighbour. The young man replies, that these he had observed from his earliest youth. Was there anything more to be done? Now most would have set themselves to refute the ruler's assertions, and to prove him a sinner, and therefore not possessed of the law's prize, but of its curse. The Saviour does not do so; but tells him that there was a higher *standard* than Moses', and a higher *reward*. "The Law made nothing perfect." If he wished perfection in doing good, let him give up the wealth of this world which the Law had made over to him, and he should have *treasure in heaven*. This is not 'Jewish,' but in contrast with it. The Law promised treasure on earth. The *heaven* itself was by the Law regarded as instrumental in giving *wealth on earth*. The land of promise was "a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the *rain of heaven*:" Deut. xi, 11. "The Lord shall open to thee his *good treasure the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in its season*, and to bless all the work of thine hand:" xxviii, 12. "The fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine: also *his heavens shall drop down dew*:" xxxiii, 28. Of heaven, as a place in which the dweller on earth was to lay up treasure, Moses had no idea.

The disciple of Moses stumbled at this new requirement, and turned away with sadness. Jesus then addresses Himself to disciples: "Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter the *kingdom of heaven*." Here is a new object. The Law sets a man to win *eternal life* by his obedience. The gospel *gives eternal life*, but sets a believer to seek the *kingdom of God* by works of faith and obedience: Rom. vi, 23; Matt. vii, 21; vi, 33. He who will keep present



wealth, and retain the old standard of Moses, cannot enter the millennial kingdom. This is not 'Jewish' then; but quite a contrast thereto. Impossible to nature as this call of perfection is, the Spirit of God, on His descent at Pentecost, wrought the result in the Church and among *Jews*, whom we ordinarily regard as pre-eminently fond of money and property: Acts ii, 45; iv, 35—37. This was not then, on our Lord's part, a solitary expedient to convince the young man that he was covetous; nor was it any claim of Moses' law. Jesus had made the same call upon the apostles; and they had obeyed it, as Peter observes, while he enquires what would be the result to them? Jesus' reply shows us, that the kingdom of God is a future thing; indeed, nothing else than His millennial kingdom. We are led back to the scene of glory on the Mount: we are shown how those now in the flesh may hereafter be found there in the glory. For then, when earth is regenerated, and the Saviour, as Son of man, sits upon His bright throne on earth, the twelve raised from the dead shall each rule one of the twelve tribes recovered again to the land of promise. Immediately after, the Saviour generalizes the principle He has announced, making it apply to every case in which, during the day of mystery, any disciple shall surrender any advantage of earth for His sake. They shall receive manifold the value of the thing surrendered now, and in the millennial age their eternal life shall begin.

7. Into the Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard I propose to enter somewhat fully, both because it is really difficult, and quite misunderstood; and because it is closely related to our subject. For in it Christ carries out into open view, and reasons on, the difference between the standing of Moses' disciples under law, and that of His own disciples under grace.

That it stands strictly connected with the previous context, is seen at a glance, by putting together the last verse of the ninth chapter, and the first of the xxth.

"But many shall be first last, and last first. For

the kingdom of heaven is like unto an householder." This fastens on to the general statement of ver. 29. "*Every one* that hath forsaken houses . . . . shall receive an hundred fold. \* *But many*"—

The previous context follows as a result from the question of the rich young man. 'By doing what acts of goodness can I win eternal life?' The young ruler professes that he had observed the terms of goodness required by Moses; and therefore he had won eternal life, as he supposed.

I believe then, that the parable springs out of the previous history. The young man represents the disciple of Moses, blameless to the eye of man. The apostles then put in their word, in order to exhibit to us the new body—the disciples of Jesus. The question therefore which the parable decides is this—'*Is God unjust to Israel His ancient people in setting up another standard, and new rewards? introducing thus another and a superior body?*'

The Saviour begins His teaching by the studiously obscure sentiment—"But many shall be first last, and last first."

In what sense are we to take "last" and "first?" The story of the parable explains the matter. It ends with the sentiment,—"*So the last shall be first, and the first last.*"† This therefore throws us back upon the history of the parable; and we learn that 'first' and 'last' relate to the order of the householder's call.

But the words on their second employment take a new sense. "*Many shall be first last, and last first.*" Looking again to the parable for explanation, we see that the narrative tells, not only of calls to *labour*, but of calls to *reward*. The calls to reward begin after the labour is over. The sense then is—'*Many of the first-called shall be last in order of reward; and many last-called shall be first in reward.*' For this is

\* "Manifold" is the better reading.

† The words, "For many are called, but few chosen," are omitted by four of the most valuable ancient Manuscripts.



shown, by the householder's commanding his steward to pay the labourers *beginning at the last*. But not only so, they are 'first' in other privileges of reward; as the Lord's words to the apostles (ver 28) show. Israel shall be in the coming day *earthly subjects* of Messiah; but apostles and those of the Church who are accounted worthy, shall be *heavenly rulers*, joint-kings with Christ.

In the parable then of the Labourers in the Vineyard the Householder is God the Father, the Steward is the Son. The labourers first hired are the Jews; and the agreement is the covenant of Sinai. The labourers hired afterward have no definite agreement made with them. But we have especially to do with the last hired. At the eleventh hour, when it wanted but an hour to the close of the day's work, the householder engages some who have been idling all day. To them He simply says—"Go ye also into the vineyard." The words, 'And whatsoever is just ye shall receive,' are not genuine;\* and only hinder the true interpretation of the parable. For it turns on this,—that towards the *last* called the *goodness* of the Master is exhibited; as His *justice* is displayed toward the *first*. Accordingly, apostles had followed Christ without any previous agreement. To Simon Peter, and to James, John, and Andrew, Jesus says, "*Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.*" At once they leave their ship and nets, and follow. Jesus sees Matthew sitting as the collector of taxes, and says, "*Follow me. And he arose and followed Him:*" iv, 19—22; ix, 9. They now learn the reward they are to receive as trusters in Christ.

The coming of the evening or end of the day's work answers to the close of this present evil age. It is then time for "the rest which remaineth for the people of God" to begin. The workmen therefore are called, and receive their pay, beginning at the last hired.

What then is their "hire," "the penny," (or "the

\* See Tregelles, Alford, and the critics generally.

denarius,") which is given to each of them? It seems clearly to signify "eternal life." For the subject begins by the rich man's question—"How shall I win *eternal life?*"

The wages which all the labourers are to receive cannot be the millennial glory; because Jesus assures the disciples, that the young man who will continue Moses' servant is to be excluded therefrom. Jesus had exhibited to him the higher reward set before the later-called, and he turns away. The apostles in their words to the Saviour manifest who are meant by the last-called. The Redeemer adds too at the conclusion of the chapter,—that His own disciples should obtain also "eternal life."

The superiority of the last called consists in their being first paid. This earlier payment then would answer to the truth, that *some will enter upon eternal life a thousand years before others*. But there is more in the Saviour's previous words than is exhibited by the parable. Christians "accounted worthy" are not only to attain the millennial glory, but also a higher standing in it than that which will be granted to Israel. To Israel under the millennium will be given the *earthly* glory; to Jesus' followers the *heavenly* glory, and the place of rule over the men of earth.

The plea then which Israel, in the jealousy of nature, would naturally make, is put into the mouth of the first order of labourers. "These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us, who have borne the burden and heat of the day." The Lord's answer is in effect—"That so long as He keeps His original terms with the Jew, the Jew has no just grounds of complaint, if his Father choose another body and bestow upon them higher privileges than He has on the earthly people. The terms of justice are fixed. But there are no limits to the outflow of *goodness*, when the dues of justice are paid."

But the Saviour has stated the case far too favourably for the Jew. He allows it to be assumed, that



Israel has observed the terms of the agreement; and therefore can *demand* the promised pay. Accordingly, He does not question the young man's plea of unflinching obedience to the Decalogue. But we know, that no flesh can be pronounced righteous, when brought face to face with the law of God. Thus God is fully justified in His choice of the Church before all time, to be superior to every creature; as being "the body of Christ," "the fulness of Him who fills all in all." "So the last shall be first." The people who are called after Israel shall yet exceed them in glory, "to the *praise of the glory of His grace*, wherein He made us accepted in the Beloved:" Eph. i, 6. Israel is a witness of God's justice; the Church, of His mercy.

Moreover, another point should be observed. The higher place is presented to the young man, but he prefers to keep to the rule of Moses. Thus—Jesus tells us—he shuts himself out from the earlier, or millennial glory. This is an exemplification of our Lord's previous word in Matt. v, 20.

The general principle holds good, not with regard to this young man alone, but to all others under the gospel, who hear the terms of entering the millennial glory, but prefer to take the old standard of Moses as their rule of life. Hence the Saviour limits His first statement. He says not—"All the first shall be last, and all the last first." But "*Many* shall be first last, and last first." This therefore shows, that millennial glory is not something inseparably attached to a position given by God—such as the position of Israel under law, or of Christians under grace:—but is the reward of obedience to the words of Jesus.

It is evident from what has been said, that the usual interpretations of this parable are founded on mistakes.

1. It is clear from the parable itself—that our Lord is not speaking of the calls to salvation of individuals at different stages of life. For at the close it is not a plea of individual against individual; but of *class* against *class*. They are hired in classes. At the con-

clusion, the first class pleads against the last. "*These last* have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made *them* equal to *us*." It is not—as it would have been on the theory I have named—'I worked more than *he*.' Besides, the lesson which would then flow from the parable—that there will be no difference of degrees in glory—is quite untrue—negatived by the most express Scriptures: 1 Cor. iii, 7, 8; Gal. vi, 5—10. And Jesus in the previous context promises to the twelve apostles thrones over the twelve tribes. Moreover in the parable of the Pounds, we find ten cities given to the man of ten pounds; and five to the winner of five pounds.

This portion of the gospel then presents in clearest light the two standings of Moses, and of Christ. The precepts of *Moses* are one thing; the requirements of *Christ* are another. *The blessings which the Law promised and bestowed on the obedient, are absolutely hindrances in the way of the Christian's present walk, and future reward.* The young man if he would obey Christ, must surrender his wealth; and with it also the good opinion of his fellows, in order to obtain riches in heaven, and glory in the millennial kingdom: Luke vi, 20—26. The precepts of Christ are the perfection of goodness: the precepts of Moses were not.

The Gospel gives eternal life at once to every believer. But, as this parable shows, *even when eternal life is possessed, there is a lofty rule of life set before us by Christ, and a prize to be sought for in the way of obedience to that rule.* The reward is to be in proportion to the surrenders for the Lord Jesus, and to diligence in His service. Also we see, that since Christ has come, all who fixedly attach themselves to Moses as their rule of life, refusing Jesus' loftier commands, cut themselves off from millennial glory.

8. Again does our Lord prophesy His death at Jerusalem, and His resurrection on the third day: xx, 17—19. This gives us the attitude of Israel and the Gentiles towards Jesus. But resurrection would set Him above them both. Jerusalem, during the time of



Mystery, is the city of murderers: the guilty city handed over to Gentiles.

9. The highest places in the millennial kingdom are next sought for by James and John in the way of canvassing and early solicitation, after the manner of courtiers of this world. But Jesus undeceives the petitioners. The chief posts in His kingdom are not *so* to be won. Their request proceeded upon several mistakes. (1.) First, that the kingdom was now close at hand—so that, as soon as Jesus arrived at Jerusalem, they would, with Him, mount their thrones. The Lord therefore instructs them, that a dreary time of the world's enmity against Himself and His followers, must yet intervene. This is more fully drawn out in the Parable of the Pounds: Luke xix. (2.) The person who would appoint directly to the posts of glory was not Himself, but his Father. "To sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, save to those for whom it has been prepared by my Father." (*Greek.*) (3.) And the Father means to distribute such posts, according to sufferings endured for Christ's sake. *Unconsciously, therefore, James and John were asking to have presented to themselves a cup of suffering second only to that of our Lord!* Had they known that, they had certainly not presented such a request. So true was it, that though there are such thrones to be had at last, they knew not *what* they were asking for.

The discovery of this request by the remaining ten apostles produced great indignation against the two; who, as they thought, had acted in a mean, underhand manner. Jesus then makes known to us the second contrast, which ambition after the future kingdom presents to the ambition of the flesh and of the world. It is quite right to be ambitious of glory in the Saviour's future kingdom. But the ambitious of the world's kingdoms are ordinarily the great; and they seek to rise, by assuming rule and authority over their fellows, and by thrusting aside their rivals. But the way to rise to glory in the future kingdom is by *lowly service* to our inferiors and equals. Jesus is promoted to a

name above every name, because of His wondrous humility and self-emptying: Phil. ii. As, then, the Father's good pleasure has thus decreed with regard to the King of the future kingdom, so also with regard to the nobles of the millennial reign. Through *suffering* and *service*, not through luxury, self-indulgence, and dominion, those who would win a post of honour in the millennial kingdom must attain it.

Here ends the body of Jesus' precepts to THE CHURCH.

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## PART VI.

MATT. XX, 29—XXV.

### THE KING PRESENTED TO JERUSALEM. INTERVAL OF HIS ABSENCE.

WE return to ISRAEL. Jesus crosses the Jordan from Peræa, and arrives at Jericho. Two blind men address Him by His Jewish title—"Son of *David.*" The Lord opens their eyes, and they follow Him as trophies of His powers, to be presented to Jerusalem as proofs of the coming of a greater than David.

Next we have the Lord's solemn entry into Jerusalem, as foretold by the Jewish prophet. The *heavenly* glory of the Son of Man had been discovered to but three of those in the flesh by night, and *they* were to keep it a secret. But the *earthly* glory of the millennial kingdom is shown by day to vast multitudes, and thousands unnumbered take part in it. This is 'Jewish.' Jewish prophets foretold it, and a number of Old Testament Scriptures at once leap into light before it. This is the Son of Man, to whom the king-



dom of earth and heaven belongs; in the day of His power His people are willing: and praise bursts forth from children's lips. Jerusalem itself is wrought on to enquire at the mighty stir—'Who is this?' But the disciples themselves are not enlightened—and instead of saying—'O Zion, the Son of David, thy king cometh to thee!' They say only—"This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee." Jesus enters and cleanses the temple; for it has been polluted again since His first cleansing. It is "a den of robbers." Still He heals the lame and the blind there—'taking away the lame and the blind,' after a better fashion than David, when he conquered Jerusalem: 2 Sam. v, 6. But the temple is garrisoned against him by spiritual Jebusites, who look with envy and hatred on all His doings. While the children shout—"Save now for the Son of David"—the chief priests and scribes are sore displeased. Salvation cannot come as yet to the Jew. He is but a fig tree full of leaves, but destitute of fruit. He is withered by just sentence of the Christ.

But to the disciple of Jesus the power of miracle should belong, even as it did to the master. The withering of a fig tree should be but a trifle to them: they might, by faith, move the Mount of Olives itself. To their prayers no limit is set.

Our Lord next brings out the wickedness of Israel.

The great ignore the call of John the Baptist, and therefore to them the kingdom which John heralded cannot come. Jesus would leave the nation still under Gentile fetters. Since they would not own their king—let them pay the taxes of Cæsar! Some of them believe not in resurrection; therefore the resurrection of the just shall be put off, and these Sadducees shall not enter. For resurrection is the real basis of the kingdom; the only way in which Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob can possess the land promised them.

Jesus, in His reply to the Sadducees, deals only with the higher or heavenly department of the kingdom, when He says: "*In the resurrection they neither*

marry nor are given in marriage." For many Israelites *in the kingdom* will both marry and be given in marriage. For they will be still in bodies of flesh, and will not have passed through resurrection. "Again shall be heard . . . . in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem . . . . *the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride:*" Jer. xxxiii, 11. Of the priests of the temple at Jerusalem God says, "that they shall not take for their wives a widow, but maidens of the house of Israel:" Ez. xlv, 22. And of the Israelite of millennial days, the Psalmist says—"Thy wife shall be as the fruitful vine by the sides of thine house; thy children like olive plants round about thy table:" Ps. cxxviii, 3. Here then again we recognize the two standings in the kingdom; that of Israel, as still in the flesh; that of the risen from the dead,—among whom, and first of whom, will be found saints of the Church.

Jesus, in His questions to the Pharisees, suggests to them that they had omitted to own one of the *two* natures of Messiah. These two natures of the Christ are the basis of the twofold aspect of the kingdom. Jesus' sonship of *David* is the foundation of the *earthlies* of the kingdom; His sonship of the *Father* in heaven is the basis of "*his heavenly kingdom.*" Thus He points out to them that deficiency on their part which was supplied by Nathaniel at the very outset of his career. "Rabbi, thou art the *Son of God*, thou art the *King of Israel.*" Then Jesus discovers to him the union of heaven and earth in His person, in the day of the manifested kingdom. Hence, negatively—The refuser of Jesus as the Son of *God* refuses also the heavenly department of the kingdom. The refuser of Jesus as Son of *David*, and King of Israel, refuses the earthly view of the kingdom. And hence also, positively—Since the gospels give Jesus as both Son of David and Son of God, they give both the earthly and heavenly aspects of the kingdom.

The cxth Psalm, whence Jesus' arrow is taken, shows us Jesus on high as the Priest also, seated on



the Father's throne. This is the time of the Church, as Paul teaches in the epistle to the Hebrews.

I have omitted to notice the Saviour's parables of Matt. xxi. He instructs the Pharisees, that in rejecting John's testimony, and the baptism which God had commanded through Him, they had shut themselves out of the kingdom of glory; while repenting and baptized harlots and publicans would be admitted.

In the Wicked Husbandmen, Jesus teaches, how justly both the preaching of the kingdom of glory, and the entrance into its higher department, would be taken away from Israel as a nation; because of their slaughter of the prophets, and of the Son of God. But the tidings would be sent to the elect, both of the Jews and Gentiles, who would bring forth "*the fruits of it.*" A remarkable expression! In it I seem to read, that where true views of the kingdom of God are refused, there the distinctive life of a Christian cannot be lived. He only who rightly receives the kingdom, will *bring forth the fruits of the kingdom*: xxi, 43.

In the verse which follows we obtain a view, both of the kingdom in mystery, and of the kingdom in manifestation. While the stone is at rest in the day of God's patience, unbelievers may try their strength against it, and attempt to crush it. They will find it too strong for them, and it will bruise and break them. But if they be found adversaries when the kingdom comes in might with Christ as the Stone descending from heaven, they will be ground to powder. For it is the day of justice then. It is observable that in the last two cases Jesus employs the phrase, "*the kingdom of God,*" and *that*, in the gospel which ordinarily uses the expression, "*kingdom of heaven.*" I imagine it is, in order that we may see that He is referring to the superior or heavenly department of the kingdom. For the inferior and earthly department is still retained for Israel by covenant, when God shall take away their sins.

The parable of the Wedding Garment follows, discovering to the Pharisees the need of a righteousness

better than their own, in order to enter the millennial kingdom. The guests for the kingdom are collecting; but before the Son appears, the Father will cast out from the churches those who do not trust His Son's imputed righteousness. The parable shows also, that as long as the guests are being collected for the feast by the gospel-message, so long Israel retains its attitude of unbelief.

Chap. xxiii. Moses is owned still as the guide of Israel. In the ceremonial department, Jesus' disciples were still to be obedient to Moses' regulations. This was not in force upon the Gentiles: Acts xv. Nay, and the vision of the sheet set Peter, and those who understood it, free from the law of Moses altogether.

Jesus' disciples are to be unlike the Pharisees in their vain use of titles of honour, and in their self-exaltation. For the coming day will abase all such.

Jerusalem is given up to foes. God will once more try Israel, and they will prove as murderous to His messengers as before. Then vengeance—according to God's covenant with Noah—for all the martyrs' blood will fall upon living men, whether of Israel, or of the Gentiles. Jerusalem as the guiltiest of all cities, in that day will suffer the most fearfully of all. That day of wrath is seen in its fulness in the Vials of Revelation: 29—36.

The temple, deserted by its God, is to be desolate till Jesus' return. Then comes its promised day of glory: Ez. xliii. This dismantling of Jerusalem and of its temple gives us the beginning of the day of the Mystery of the Christ—the time of the Church, when the true worshippers, bound to no one sacred spot on earth, worship the Father and the Son by the Spirit: John iv, 23, 24.

Matt. xxiv, xxv. We have now arrived at the ever-memorable prophecy, which traces for us the great events to occur during the Saviour's absence, up to the time of the Great King's appearance upon earth. It tells us of the Lord's actings towards the three great bodies which God is recognizing—"the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God."



The prophecy divides into two great halves in verse 31. Before that point, all is direct teaching; after it, seven parables were spoken by our Lord. The first half is spoken to disciples occupying the same spiritual position as the apostles then. They are in Judæa, and observe Jewish rites. In this part Jesus gives replies to the three questions of the disciples—(1.) *When shall the temple be thrown down?* v. 2, 3. (2.) *What shall be the sign of thy (secret) presence?* (3.) *What shall be the sign of the end of this evil age?*

1. The Lord Jesus answers the first of these questions first. The temple would be destroyed by the Romans, when there were many false Christs, wars, and rumours of wars: 5, 6. *This is the only part which has been fulfilled.* Jesus cautions us against supposing, that the Roman destruction is the end of the age. "THE END IS NOT YET." The intermediate period, about which the Saviour says nought, is the time of the Mystery, the day of the Church. Eighteen-hundred years have filled this gap.

Jesus next proceeds to answer the third and second questions:—"What shall be the sign of the end of the age?"

2. He replies, that the beginning of the throes of woe will be wars, famines, pestilences. This brings us into connection with the horses of Rev. vi, which are equally future. 3. But persecution would likewise arise, and the love of the majority of the disciples wax cold. 4. In spite of this, Jewish missionaries would be sent forth by God, to proclaim Messiah's near advent, and the coming of the kingdom of glory. "Then shall the end come:" ver. 14.

5. That would be the time of the Great Woe foretold by Daniel; and it would encircle in its especial focus Jerusalem and its defiled temple, in which the Anti-christ would sit proclaiming himself to be God.

Whenever the statue of this Destroyer should be lifted up and set on the temple, that would be the time to flee for liberty and life with headlong speed; not once looking behind, as did Lot's wife. Then

God's most dread judgments will descend, not on Israel alone, but on all men: so that, except grace had designed to save some elect, none of mankind would be left alive.

6. *At that time* false Christs and false prophets will arise, possessed *as they never have yet been*, of stupendous powers of miracle. And their followers will profess to be able to point out the true Messiah, as already on earth *in secret*. Such are not to be believed. The true Messiah will be secretly in heaven; and when He does appear it will be instantaneously, like the lightning, filling the sky with His glory, and arresting every eye on earth. He will come with His hosts as the eagles, to prey on the world's dead carcase of unbelief.

7. Just after those days of woe, the heavenly bodies will be shaken. A luminous cross will appear in the sky, as the sign of that Jesus whom Israel crucified. Then shall the tribes remember their fathers' iniquity and mourn; and the Lord shall at length descend out of the heaven to the earth on a cloud, as the long expected King of Kings. Then shall the great trumpet be blown, which shall assemble to Him Israel from all quarters of the earth. *After that comes the kingdom;* but of that—as supposed to be known already—Jesus gives no description.

This series of events then is the sign of the end of this evil age; and the cross in the sky is the sign that Jesus is really present in heaven secretly.

Now commences the series of seven Parables.

1. The Fig-tree is the first. When the fig-tree's branch begins to become tender, and to put forth leaves, all know that earth's warm and genial season of the year is nearly come. So, when the heart of Israel, then restored to their land, shall show signs of repentance and a return to the long disused rites of Moses—which are the leaves of the tree—then all who believe in Jesus' words will begin to look for the world's happy millennial days as close at hand.



Our days of the Mystery are the world's wintry period of coldness, darkness, and slipperiness. Then "the times of refreshing," and of Jesus' presence in the manifested kingdom of God are at hand.

But, in spite of the fulfillment of all the Saviour's words, the evil "generation" of unbelief will abide even to the burning up of the earth. The millennium itself will not cause them to cease utterly. So we find, that after the millennium, when Satan is let loose for his little while, a great army of unbelievers rises up against God; and marches against His Christ at Jerusalem. He who will put side by side the nine occurrences of the word "generation" in Matthew, will easily deliver himself out of the difficulty felt by most in regard of v. 34. The 'generation' is the *moral* one of unbelief.

2. The second parable—THE DAYS OF NOAH—is the most interesting and critical of all. For it is the point at which the two great bodies—Jewish and Christian—meet. In it the Saviour gives another answer to the question—"What shall be the *sign of Thy Presence?*" That the Presence is a secret one, is certain; because we do not want a sign of that which we already see. And the Lord's words had suggested the idea to the disciples—"Ye shall not *see me henceforth, till ye say.*" Jesus then up to that time would be somewhere in secret.

While then the Saviour teaches that the time of His return cannot be calculated or known, because it is one of the secrets of His Father; He gives certain moral signs which shall characterize those days. They will be like the times of Noah. God came down and spake to Noah about the world, its wickedness and doom, and bade him construct an ark for safety to some of mankind and some of the world's animals. Jesus is now our Noah, "Giver of rest." His ark of escape is on high. Just before the destruction of the flood there was general unbelief, in spite of the preaching by Noah of the wrath at hand. At length the time came. God gave a sign of His judgments being

at the door. He called Noah to enter the ark: He caused, by supernatural agency, creatures of all kinds, wild and tame, birds and beasts of prey together with their usual victims, to enter the ark. What did all that mean? Why, that all the earth was unsafe! That now the crisis of which Noah was instructed to warn the evil world, had arrived! God allowed seven days' respite. Would the world see His meaning, and repent? They did not. "They recognized it not, till the flood came and took them all away." Then *when too late*, as they sunk beneath the waves, they understood, that this was in very deed the fulfillment of the Lord's threats by His prophet.

Answerably hereto, God will give a like miraculous sign to the world of the Great Tribulation about to overwhelm the sinners of the earth. It will be the Christian's entry into the better ark above. Noah made the old ark, and could enter in on his feet. But Christ has made the new one for the watchful of His Church. They cannot enter it actively; but must be caught up to meet Him into air.

This then is the explanation of the words which follow—"Then shall two be in the field; one is taken, and one is left. Two (women) grinding at the mill; one is taken, and one is left." (*Greek.*) The language hurries; the thing will be done in an instant! The taken will be in an instant in the ark of refuge, out of the range of the hour of temptation and woe coming on the earth. "*Watch therefore*; for ye know not at what hour your Lord is coming." The taking is the result of the Lord's advent: the taking or leaving turns upon the spiritual state of the disciple, as watchful or not. The rapture depends, not upon the possession of simple faith, but on the *watchfulness* of faith. The cry to the Church, (not to Israel,) is "*Watch!*" 1 Thess. v, 6; Rev. iii, 2, 3.

'But may not the 'taking' be a *taking away in judgment*, and the 'leaving' be the leaving in mercy of one of the earthly elect, in order to replenish the earth?'



(1.) It is not; as is apparent on a glance at the Greek word employed. It means, to 'take as companions.' It marks ordinarily an honour done to the person so taken, both in the Old Testament and the New: Gen. xxii, 3; xxxi, 23; xlvii, 2. But its especial significance is found in the New Testament, in the Saviour's dealings with His apostles; of which presently.

(2.) It is the sign like that of Noah's day. Now about that time, "Enoch was translated, that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please God, for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that he becometh the rewarder of those that diligently seek Him." (*Greek.*) Hence the Lord's word,—"*Watch* therefore." This is faith's path now; this is the way to be like Enoch. "Enoch walked with God; and *he was not, for God took him.*" Gen. v, 24.

The word used to describe the destruction of men by the flood, is quite another: it means "take away" by violence.

(3.) The sign of the flood at hand was not destruction, but the entry into a place of safety preceding the destruction. So it is here on this interpretation. The sign of Noah's day was miraculous; so it is here. It is also the sign of the secret presence of Christ. A mysterious disappearance is made the sign of a mysterious presence. It will be a token of destruction coming on all the habitable earth. Hence, God lifts His Enoch and Elijah above the earth. To Noah God said, '*Take to thee* into the ark two of each of all flesh—male and female.' Noah did so. Here is Jesus then carrying out the type; it is His hand that *takes* them *to Himself*: and they are a *male* and a *female*! The male is at work in the field, the female at the handmill grinding corn: Gen. vi, 19; vii, 2.

(4.) The word refers to the Saviour's Presence, which is the great centre of 'the days of Noah.' These watchful ones are accounted worthy to be His com-

panions. So Jesus during His life on earth took with Him three of His favoured ones, on three remarkable occasions. On the first, He allowed them alone of all His disciples, to see the first resurrection from the dead: Matt. ix. On the second occasion He took them apart, to behold the transfiguration; on the third, they were told to watch with Jesus, in Gethsemane; but did not. Accordingly they were *left* by the Saviour to the hour of temptation; and fell, and fled. "He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy. And HE LEFT THEM, and went away again:" xxvi, 43, 44. Thus these three Companionships\* of Jesus are made to us the witnesses of three cardinal points in the future of the Church—the First Resurrection; the Rapture and Presence on high; and the day of Great Tribulation enwrapping the unwatchful in its hurricane! The same three persons were in all three scenes, to teach us, that a believer may be found in any one of the three positions.

Behold here then the two people of Christ, and their two characteristic refuges. (1) When trouble assails the whole *habitable* earth, the *earthly* disciples are *actively* to flee into the *uninhabitable* part of the earth—the desert—there to be fed by miracle, as of old: xxiv, 16; Rev. xii, 6, 13, 14. (2) But Jesus has a higher and *heavenly* people who are pleasers of Him, as Enoch was. They tread in the steps of Him who always pleased the Father: John viii, 29; Matt. iii, 17; 1 John iii, 22; Rom. viii, 8; 1 Cor. vii, 32; 1 Thess. iv, 1, 2. †

Israel is in direct contrast to these. "They *please not God*, and are contrary to all men:" ii, 15. But lest we should think, that simply to be converted and to belong to the Church is enough, the Holy Spirit gives

\* In them the same word *παραλαμβάνω* is used. (1) Mark v, 40. (2) Luke ix, 28; Matt. xvii, 1; Mark ix, 2. (3) Matt. xxvi, 37; Mark xiv, 33. See also John xiv, 3.

† And then we have Christ's descent in the same chapter, and His gathering of His people to Him.



us a solemn warning from the example of Israel, delivered out of Egypt, led through the Red Sea, and daily fed supernaturally. "But with the majority of them (*Greek*) God was *not well pleased*; for they were overthrown in the wilderness:" 1 Cor. x, 5.

Thus one of God's peoples is made the sign to the other; as it was foretold—"Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for *signs* and *wonders in Israel* from the Lord of hosts:" Isa. viii, 18. The accepters of this sign will see, that destruction is at hand, and will escape. The refusers will be the unbelieving: they will not recognize in it the hand of God, but be cut off.

We do not read of any spectators when Enoch went up. But there were, when Elijah ascended. Fifty sons of the prophets beheld. Now Israel occupies that very place. "*Ye are the sons of the prophets*," says Peter to the Jews, in the temple: Acts iii, 25. (*Greek*.) Thus those who own our Lord's words amongst the tribes of Israel, will learn by this sudden and mysterious disappearance, that the Son of God has descended to His pavilion of cloud, (Psa. xviii,) and that the time of the destruction of the godless is at hand.

The heavenly advent comes first, and the heavenly people are caught up first; just as in our Lord's life the transfiguration long preceded the triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

The presence of Jesus has, like the presence-cloud at the Red Sea, two sides; one dark, and one bright. To the people of God it is salvation; to His foes destruction. And here in this prophecy it forms the separation between God's two peoples—Israel sees but its exterior; but another people enter within it. To these Jesus proceeds, in the four presence-parables which follow—to unfold its interior significance. Israel has to wait the Lord's *appearing*. These behold Him, ere He is manifested to the earth.

(1.) The *Householder* shows us the testing effect of the Lord's coming on His saints of the heavenlies. He comes as the thief, with noiseless foot and hand,

stealing away the ripe fruit from off his tree. Is any Christian watching? Like the master advertised of a thief's intended visit, he is awake; and his house is not robbed. Yea, he is taken with acceptance to his Lord. But the unwatchful one is the householder, who, in spite of warning, goes to sleep. In the morning he wakes to find his house broken into in the night, and his jewels gone! Such will be the position of the believer left behind—his zealous Christian friends gone, and the days of tribulation upon him!

(2.) The *Steward* discovers to us the result to the Christian who is set in the place of an apostle, to watch over the interests of a church of Christ. Happy for him, if his Lord finds him faithful! Sad, indeed, if he, through failing faith, be found untrue to his trust!

(3.) The *Virgins* gives us the result of the Saviour's presence to the *dead in Christ*, as the two preceding parables have disclosed the results, to those who are *alive* on earth. The dead are as *ten to two*: together making up the sacred *twelve*. All the ten are alike believers, come out of the world with lit torches to meet Christ. All alike *fall asleep*, and continue so, till "the voice of the archangel and the trump of God." Some are ready, and enter the Marriage Supper. Some are not ready, and have to wait.\*

(4.) The *Talents* presents the responsibility of each believer for the abilities and opportunities our Lord has bestowed on him. Reward at last will be "according to works." The accepted enter "the joy of their Lord,"—that is, the millennial kingdom of Christ.

This is the last of the Presence-parables, and it finishes the judgment of the CHURCH OF CHRIST.

The *Sheep and Goats* is, as the Saviour tells us, His judgment of "the nations," or the *Gentiles* who will be alive on earth when he comes. There is no word about resurrection here. He judges them in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, as Joel tells us: (Joel iii.) He settles

\* See this parable fully treated in "*The Prophecy on Olivet*."



the controversy between Israel and the nations. He judges according to His word to Abraham. "*Blessed* is he that blesseth thee, and *cursed* is he that curseth thee." Thus our Lord decides the doom of each by the question—how they have behaved toward "His least brethren,"—those of Israel. (*Greek*) The church are his brethren in the highest sense; the sons of Mary his brethren in the second sense; and Israel his brethren in the lowest.

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## PART VII.

### CHAPTERS XXVII, XXVIII.

#### THE KING'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION.

IN Matthew's twenty-sixth chapter, we have Israel actively hostile to our Lord, and the hatred of his nation is shown rushing on to the great catastrophe. Jesus is aware of it, and of the Betrayer who is found in the very inner circle of His followers. The Sanhedrim assembles to devise plans for putting Jesus to death; and Judas, offended at the Lord's rebuke of his hypocrisy and covetousness, spontaneously offers himself as the Traitor.

Then our Lord, as still the *Israelite*, celebrates the *passover* with the twelve in Jerusalem. But upon it He inserts a new bud,—the Supper of the Lord. Thus He fulfils His own word concerning His new doctrine,—that it required new rites to give it distinct expression. Thus, too, He shows, that there is no collision between Moses and Himself. The new covenant is still to be made with Israel; and it is to be the perfecting of the basis of the old one. The true

followers both of Moses and of Jesus, are to be assembled together in the millennial kingdom of glory.

Now, instead of the flesh of the lamb, Jesus gives *bread* to His disciples, as the representative of His body during His absence. He gives them wine also, and bids them to drink of it; for here is presented, in emblem, the blood of the new covenant, about to be shed effectually for the elect, not merely, as of old, to confirm the covenant, but to take away sins, both those under the Law, and those of the gospel. *As long, then, as the Lord's Supper is with Christ's sanction celebrated, so long it is certain, that the kingdom of God is not come.* It is the token, that the king is away; and this rite is designed to bring him to mind, as dying for his saints, and giving them a seat at God's table. We show forth his death as the Church, till Christ come: 1 Cor. xi. And we pray still—to our Father in heaven—"Thy kingdom *come*:" Matt. vi, 10. Israel drinks wine at the Passover, but will not own the new covenant; or the blood of it, as signified by the wine.

But in the next words of the Saviour, we see the proof of a still future dispensation, while yet Jesus recognizes that of Moses. "I will not henceforth drink of *this fruit of the vine*, till that day when I drink it *with you, new in the kingdom of my Father.*" (*Greek.*) Jesus would not taste of that wine; for it represented His blood. He takes, hereupon, the *Nazarite* vow; and is fitly henceforth called '*Jesus the Nazarite.*'\* This vow He will keep, *till the kingdom of God is come*; and then, with the twelve raised from the dead, and with others His disciples, He will cause his vow to cease; because the joy of the millennial kingdom has put away grief. This vow shows the point at which

\* So it should be rendered in Luke xxiv, 19; Acts ii, 22; iii, 6. The word occurs *seven* times in the Acts; *four* times in the ministry of Peter; *three* under that of Paul. Thus Jesus' residence at Nazareth prepared the way for the higher sense of His name.



He aims ; tells how His heart is set upon introducing the kingdom of glory, as the time of freedom for Israel, the time of deliverance from the slavery of corruption for His faithful followers, and the time of His own fully-earned joy and reward from His Father. Observe, however, that to the church Jesus speaks of the *heavenly* department of the kingdom. "I drink it with you new in *the kingdom of my Father.*"

This is the last occurrence of the word "kingdom" in this Gospel ; and it is very significant. It proves, beyond doubt, that the gospel is not, in the true sense, the kingdom of God. Not till Jesus is returned and drinks wine with His servants rescued from the dead, is the Father's kingdom come. Then has the celebration of the Supper, and the meaning of the cup, as signifying blood, departed.

This is far more distinctly drawn out in the gospel of Luke. Luke xxii, 13—16 : "And they went, and found as he had said unto them, and they made ready the *passover*. And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this *passover* with you before I suffer : *For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.*" *As then Jesus has not since celebrated the passover, the kingdom of God is not yet come.* "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves : *For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.*" *As Jesus has not since drunk wine, refusing it when offered at the cross : (Mark xv, 23,) the kingdom of God has not yet come.*

Here is the earthly aspect of the kingdom relating to the deliverance of Israel, as typified in Egypt ; but not then completed. When that day is come, Jesus spreads on earth a feast for all nations at Jerusalem ; and, for His risen ones, death is swallowed up in victory : Isa. xxv.

Then come the verses which describe *the Lord's*

*Supper* ; and bread represents the Lord's broken body, while He is absent ; and the cup represents His blood, shed for sin : 19, 20.

But the future kingdom and glory are very definitely described in verses which follow, 28—30. "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me ; *That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*"

After this, we have our Lord's prediction of the hour and power of darkness, with its effect upon the church. Peter does not believe the testimony, and is confident in his own strength. In less degree it is true of them all. Then comes the trial, specially of the favoured three, at Gethsemane. "*Watch!*" But they fall asleep. Jesus comes to them, and finds them asleep. He reproves Peter for his failure of promise, and then adds to this exhortation to watchfulness, the command to pray ; that they might escape the temptation already close upon them. But again they sleep ; and Jesus finding them so, leaves them. There is but a brief interval of repose, and the betrayer and his forces are upon them ! Then those who slept prove themselves unequal to the day of trouble, and of Satan's sifting. This is a type of what will come to pass, when the Lord at His coming will find some watching, and will take them on high, out of the dark day ; but will find others spiritually asleep, and will leave them to the rude awakening of the day of temptation, which will, by Satan's special fury and power, assail the dwellers upon the earth.

In that season of Satan's power of old, Israel sought false witness against our Lord, condemned Him as a blasphemer, mocked Him, and delivered Him to the Romans. The governor, urged on by the Jews' malice, and caring only for his own place and popularity, condemns Jesus, and delivers Him to death ; while Israel takes upon itself the guilt of the righteous blood.

The Gentiles and men of Israel mock His title as king



of the Jews, and His power to destroy and restore the temple. Jesus dies, and the veil of the temple is rent from top to bottom; signifying the setting aside of the temple of earth, and of the Mosaic dispensation. The High Priest had before rent his clothes: another intimation of like kind; telling of the priesthood taken from him, and given to the Righteous One, the Son of God standing before him. Graves are opened at His death: and after His resurrection, many bodies of saints rise from the tomb, and enter Jerusalem. Typical is this of the first resurrection, and of the day of the kingdom, when Jerusalem shall be "the holy city," and the camp of the saints.

At even, Jesus' body is taken down from the tree of the curse, and is laid in the rich man's tomb. Our Lord's Jewish adversaries combine to shut out human guile from the Saviour's tomb, lest they should be annoyed with a phase of religion more troublesome even than the first to their pretensions. The stone is sealed, the watch is set; lest the disciples should conspire to deceive the nation with a false story of Jesus' resurrection.

The morning comes; the watching soldiers are affrighted by the terrors of an earthquake, and of a bright angel descending from on high, rolling back the stone, and sitting on it. They are struck powerless before him. The women are invited by the angel to enter the sepulchre, and see the place where *the Lord* lay. They were also to take the news to His disciples, that Jesus should be seen by them in Galilee, as He promised. As they go on their errand, Jesus meets them; and they worship. The Saviour says—"Go tell *my brethren* that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me." This brotherhood of Christ is the highest of the three. It is that of the Church: Phil. i, 14; John xx, 17.

In the meanwhile the leaders of Israel hear the true state of the matter from the terrified watch. How do they act? Do they say, as the awed magicians of Egypt?—'*This is the finger of God!* We have shut out

man's deceit; here the Most High has met us!' No! they bribe the soldiers to tell a false story. They see no fear, save from "*the Governor*" of the earth. But the Lord has patience, as though He saw and heard not. 'Tis the day of grace! They may call the "Beloved Son"—"that Deceiver,"—and be spared as yet!

The eleven *disciples* go away into Galilee, to the appointed mountain—probably that on which the Transfiguration had taken place. "On them that sat in the region and shadow of death" new light shines in resurrection. The eleven worship Jesus as Son of God. This is not Jewish. But there were others there. The angel supposes the women would be present. "Behold, he goeth before you into Galilee, there shall ye see him. Behold I have told you." This was doubtless the occasion on which the Lord was seen by above five hundred brethren at once. For it was the only instance of the Lord's appearing, in which the place was fixed beforehand. The words—"But some doubted"—I understand to refer, not to Jesus' resurrection, but to the worship rendered by the others. Was it lawful? To this the Saviour gives speedy and satisfactory reply. Instead of saying—"Stand up, I myself also am a man," He heightens their ideas of Himself. All authority was given Him by the Father over heaven and earth. But it is not now to be put forth in His wielding the iron sceptre of His kingdom against foes, but in commissioning disciples to make converts out of all nations, "immersing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Here is the new name of our God presented to the Church of Christ: 2 Cor. xiii, 14; Eph. ii, 18; 1 Pet. i, 2. The worship of the Father, Son, and Spirit, is not 'Jewish.'

At Jesus' baptism, the Father, Son, and Spirit were really present; but now, after His resurrection, that name is attached to the baptism of each believer of the Church. Baptism was sent at first to Israel alone: now it goes forth to "all the nations." Israel itself is reckoned but as one of the nations.



The teaching disciples are then to instruct the converts further in WHATEVER JESUS COMMANDED. The Holy Spirit at His descent was but to take up the work of the Son, to bring to their remembrance His words, and enforce His precepts. "And behold *I am with you* all the days until the end of the age." (*Greek.*) Jesus' concluding words are those, not of the Messiah of Israel, but of the Son of God. The gospel begins with "*Immanuel*," and "Out of Egypt I called *my Son*." It ends now in like strain. He who speaks is Jehovah present with His saints everywhere, and in all time till the kingdom of God is come. Jesus says, "all the days till the end of the age;" and in the chapter of the Parables concerning the kingdom (xiii) we learn, that "the end of the age" is the time of crisis, or of harvest for the Wheat and Tares; when the earth shall be cleared of the wicked, in order to become the kingdom of the Son of man; and when the righteous shall shine in the heavenly department of the kingdom, as the sun.\*

Baptism therefore is now enlarged in its field of application; it is meant for believers everywhere. It has obtained new significance by Jesus' burial and resurrection; it has a new name of God, which is to encircle the disciples of Jesus. Accordingly, after the descent of the Holy Ghost, Peter calls Israel to repent, and be baptized on the authority of Jesus Christ. And Peter promises the gifts of the Spirit, gives notice of the signs in the heavenly bodies, and promises salvation to every caller upon the name of the Lord, till the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord.† The Church will have lost its testimony as witness of the Day of Mercy, as soon as the great Day of Wrath has set in. God had made both Lord and Christ that

\* It is also the time of crisis to the Gentiles, as the Saviour shows in the Parable of the Dragnet: v. 49.

† Acts ii, 17—21. This was, I think, a reference to our Lord's closing words.

Jesus whom Israel slew. This seems a reference to "All authority is given me."

The same apostle is afterwards sent to the Gentile Cornelius and his friends. Peter then beholds God's acceptance of the faithful of all nations. He teaches them that Jesus "is Lord of all." They believe, and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. "Then commanded he them in the name of Jesus Christ to be baptized."\*

Lastly, as the twelve neglect to fulfil our Lord's command to travel to the nations and preach to them, God raises up a new apostleship to the Gentiles, in the person of Paul. Twice does the Holy Ghost narrate his baptism; and several times does he testify to his baptizing in person, or sanctioning others to do so: Acts ix, 18; xxii, 16.

1. Let me then sum up the matter. This gospel of Matthew speaks of the NATIONS, or GENTILES. We find a few possessed of faith, and shining in it beyond Israel; as in the case of the Magi, the two Centurions, and the Canaanite. In it the gospel of salvation is sent forth to them. In this gospel, too, is found that passage of Isaiah which prophesies, that Gentiles should hope in Messiah: a quotation which, Paul teaches us, belongs to the Church: Rom. xv, 8—13. But we see also the sin of the Gentiles in Pilate's sentence, and the soldiers' mockery. We read also of the final mission to be sent just before the end comes, and of its sad result. All the nations will hate the messengers. Lastly, we have their judgment, proceeding from the lips of the Son of man, when He is visibly seated on His throne of glory: xxv. To the sheep is given a place in the millennial kingdom.

2. With regard to ISRAEL little need be said. All own that the Jew is to be seen here, from the unreadiness of Jerusalem to welcome her Monarch, up to the hour of the cross, when the passers by and the rulers ridiculed the claims of Jesus to be King of the Jews. The lost

\* See Tregelles' text.



sheep will not be found, till Jesus returns. But then the twelve tribes are owned by our Lord, and ruled over by His subordinate fellow-kings. To Israel are granted two signs of the Saviour's secret Presence. The first is given before the days of vengeance begin : it is the rapture of the watchful of the Church. It is a token of the "destruction from the Almighty" which is ready to commence. The second is the sign of the cross. It occurs at the close of the day of wrath, when Israel's heart is softened, and Jesus is about to appear.

The twofoldness of God's people 'crops out,' as geologists say, at several points in this gospel.

1. We have found it in the twofold judgment of the trees, and the floor. By the trees are meant Israel and the Gentiles, who, when blessed, are to take root in the earth ; by the wheat, the men of the heavenly calling, who are to be taken on high. This appears again in Luke iii, 7—9.

2. We have seen it again in those words of Jesus at the opening of the Sermon on the Mount, wherein He pronounces blessed those who of old suffered for righteousness' sake ; while He sets side by side with them those who were then suffering, and should hereafter suffer for *His* sake. His disciples and the prophets are alike to be found in the future kingdom. So also in Luke vi, 20—26.

3. Again, He assures us, that His doctrine was no mere republication of Moses', but a new wine to which the old bottles of skin would be unsuited ; for which therefore, He must provide new skins. As the result of this wisdom, the doctrine of Moses and His own, each preserved in its appropriate vehicles, would descend undestroyed through the intermediate period to the day of the kingdom. And immediately ensuing thereon the Holy Spirit gives us (in type) the cleansing of Israel and the resurrection of the Church, by the righteousness and resurrection-power of the Great Physician.

4. In the twelfth chapter we have *Israel's* blindness

exhibited in the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Then Jesus, as the Sower, begins a new work, and depicts the visible results of it in the period intervening till His return. Now is the period of "the *word* of the kingdom ;" but the end of the *Wheat and Tares* shows us the *power* of the kingdom put forth to sever the good from the evil. And then appear the two departments of the kingdom—the earthly, of which the Son of Man is ruler ; and the heavenly kingdom of the Father, entered in resurrection. The present is the sphere of the *scribe* of the kingdom, instructing his fellows both about its present mystery, and its future manifestation. When the kingdom is come, the scribe's pen is exchanged for the iron rod, that breaks in pieces by justice and power, all rebellion : Rev. ii, 26, 27. Finally, we have also in the *Dragnet* the judgment of the *Gentiles*.

The new things and the old are alike recognized by our Lord, and are to be owned by us.

5. The thoughts of Israel concerning the Son are tried, and found faithless. Then the faith of the Church in Jesus as the Son of God is drawn out, and our Lord first names "the Church" as about to be built. If its members resemble its rejected and slain Head,—they also must be rejected, and oft slain. But life so lost shall bloom in millennial glory. Thereupon the Lord gives upon the Mount of Transfiguration a view of the *heavenly* glory of the millennial kingdom. At a later period Jesus offers Himself to the earthly Jerusalem as her king, the Son of David ; and a glimpse of the *earthly* glory bursts forth. See also Gal. iv, 21—31.

6. In the prophecy which bridges over the dreary interval of our Lord's absence, the three bodies we are considering make their appearance ; and they afterward take their respective places in the millennial kingdom. In the first half of Matthew xxiv, we have the destiny of Jerusalem, the temple, Judea, and a view of the disciples connected therewith.

In the four presence-parables we have the Church



of Christ without preceding signs waiting for her Lord, and at work for Christ. For she is aware both of what He desires to be done, and of the reward to be given at His appearing. In '*the days of Noah*,' we find the meeting-point of the earthly people and the heavenly: the rapt of the Church being made a sign to *Israel* of the secret Presence of the Lord. In the Sheep and Goats appear the *Gentiles*. The ark of our Noah, like the one of old, is made "with lower, second, and third stories."

7. Lastly, when the Saviour assembles with the twelve in the guest-chamber at Jerusalem, we find our Lord owning the Israelite rites of the passover, and the Nazarite vow, foretelling withal their accomplishment in the kingdom; yet adding thereto a new rite designed to distinguish, and to edify, believers in His new doctrine, who are preparing for the loftier department of the heavenly glory of the kingdom.

Both in chapter xiii and in the Prophecy on Olivet, the Church is parenthetic; the Gentiles bring up the rear.

The Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God will together make up the millennial kingdom of God; heaven and earth being of one accord in that happy day. Moreover, the Lord Jesus will be the great centre of all three divisions of men. Of the Gentiles He is head, as the Seed of the Woman, the Son of Man, and the second Adam; of the Jews He is head as son of Abraham, son of David, King of Israel. Of the Church He is head, as the Son of God.

The kingdom of God is designed for *the Church*, no less than for the Gentiles and Israel. *Let every believer in Christ seek it!* Jesus puts the kingdom forth prominently in His teaching of the Church. First, we have the Transfiguration, as the specimen of what the millennial kingdom shall be. Israel is rejected for its faithlessness; but Jesus goes on to teach apostles the way to be great in the kingdom of glory, and what tempers will exclude from it, xviii. Abstinence from marriage is good for those called to it, because there is, in

the future kingdom, a special glory attached thereto: xix, 12; Rev. xiv, 1—5. Those who would enter the kingdom must resemble little children. Riches are a hindrance to entering it. Believers' voluntary losses for Christ's sake are the way into the glory of the kingdom, beside the present benefits accruing, xix, 16—29. The way to the high places in the kingdom is through suffering and service, xx.

This is not the teaching of the gospel alone, it is echoed by the epistles Phil. iii; Heb. iii, iv; 1 Cor. iii, 8—17; iv, 1—6; vi, etc.

If then any should say—'The Gospel of Matthew is the Messiah of the Old Testament presented to the *Jews*;'—we admit it. It is so. But that is *only a part of the truth*. The gospel reveals also Jesus as the Son of God.

If any say—'The Church is *already in the kingdom*, Col. i, 13'—we answer, It is true! It is set in the kingdom while in *mystery*. But disciples are to strive to have part in it when *manifested*—as the "prize of their high calling:" Phil. iii; Heb. iii, iv; Matt. vi, 33.

If any say—'Matthew shows us the *earthly kingdom*'—we reply, It is true. But it is true *in part only*. It presents the *heavenly* glory of the kingdom also; and instructs the disciples who are to enter it in resurrection. With what consistency can any shut out the Church from it, so long as the Wheat and Tares grow together in the Time of Mystery? While the disciple is called to take up his cross in the Master's absence, and the scene of the Transfiguration pours its glory upon the Saviour's warning and precepts, is not that the time and attitude of the Church? How can the Church be thrust out of that gospel wherein the Saviour thrice speaks of it by name? xvi, 18; xviii, 17? Is not the rule concerning personal offences, is not the putting out of communion, founded on the Lord's words in Matthew? Does not the Saviour's promise to those assembling themselves together in His name, attach to assemblies of the Church? Do we



not celebrate the Lord's Supper on the ground of its appointment by our Lord?

Some would indeed detach the command to baptize from that of the Supper, as if not referring to the Church. But how the command relating to the Supper is to be in force, and that of baptism obsolete, I cannot understand. Baptism is commanded by Jesus risen from the dead, and Lord of all. The Father countersigns all His words, as well pleasing to Him. The Spirit came down to enforce the Saviour's precepts, whether given before, or after His resurrection. "*Teaching them to observe ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I COMMANDED YOU.*" Are not these the days before the end of the age? Is not the *promise* of the Saviour's presence ours? Then the *precepts* are for us also! God give us grace, that when the Lord of heaven and earth shall enter into account with His servants, it may be ours to be found obedient, and to enter His millennial joy!

THE END.